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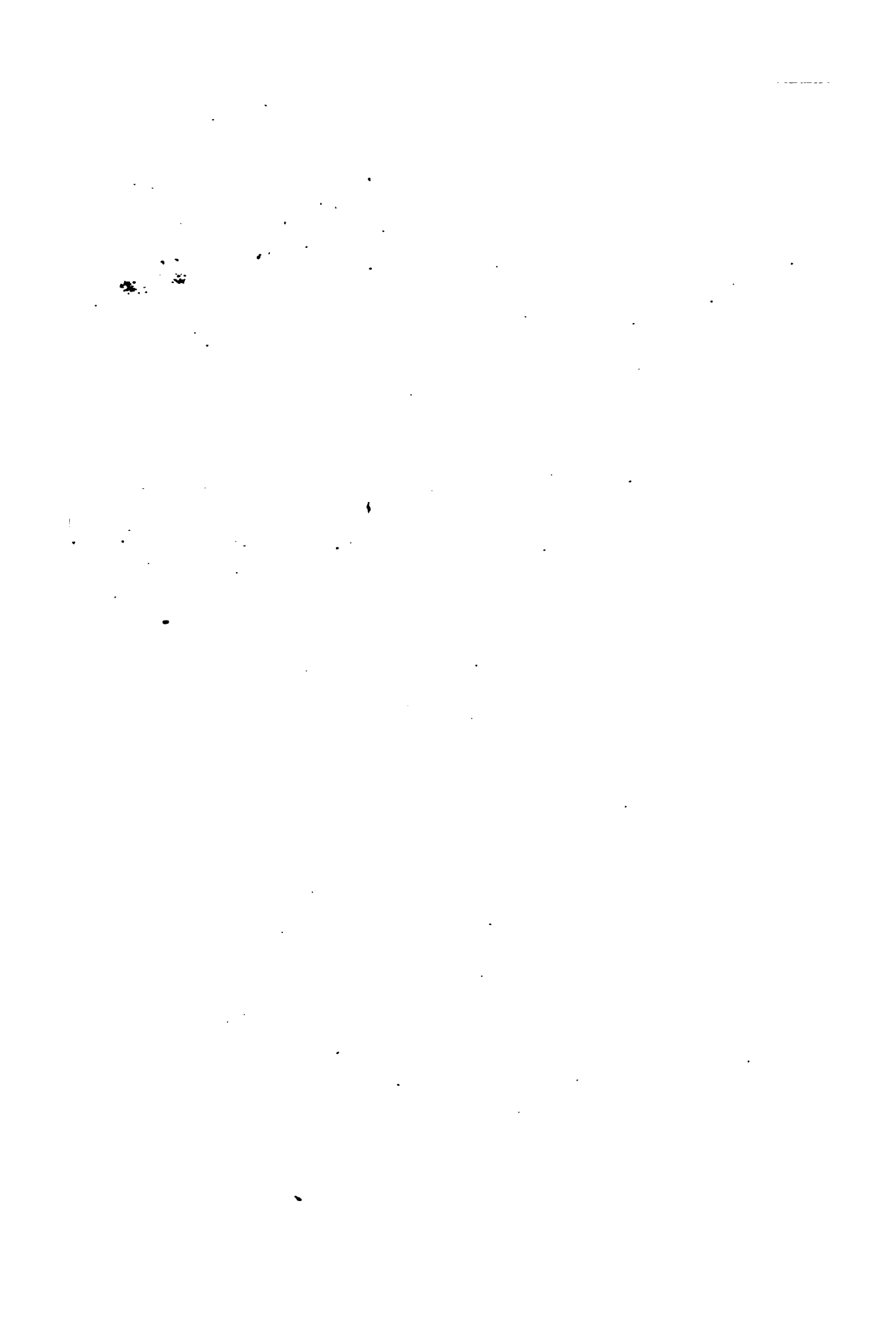
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*"The Story of our Lives from Year to Year."*—SHAKESPEARE.

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# ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

*A Weekly Journal.*

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

NEW SERIES.

VOLUME XXXVI.

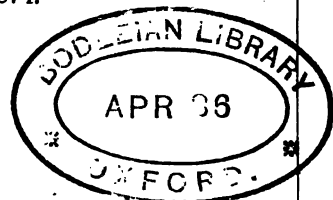
FROM MARCH 21, 1884, TO AUGUST 29, 1885.

*Including No. 851 to No. 874.*

LONDON:

PUBLISHED AT 26, WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND.

1885.



CHARLES DICKENS AND EVANS,  
GREAT NEW STREET, FETTER LANE, LONDON,  
AND CRYSTAL PALACE.

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"THE STORIES OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

No. 851. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 1885.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## "THE FLOWER OF DOOM;"

OR, THE CONSPIRATOR.

A SHORT SERIAL STORY.

By MISS BETHAM-EDWARDS,

Author of "Kitty," "Love and Mirage," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER I. THE ATELIER.

WHY did the great Shakespeare put joyous thoughts into Romeo's breast on the eve of doom? Do ecstatic moods indeed visit mortals when nearing, un-awares, the verge of dread catastrophe?

If disaster sends a herald in disguise, doth happier fortune treat us after the same fashion? Are such inner promptings hearkened to or distrusted ever?

These questions must occur to most of us at some time or other, since certain it is that dark presagement does not always betoken evil hap, nor will unwonted exuberance of spirits be surely followed by substantial joy. We feel more assurance about the connection between an unusual frame of mind and rare events. The common day is not begun with trumpet-like wakenings to destiny—thoughts like wings to lift above grosser air.

"I am far from being an unhappy woman," mused Bernarda Burke as she prepared for her busy day. "If Fortune has no more golden gifts in store, she has surely no bad either. Away, then, ye siren voices—ye stern forebodings! To work—to work! Therein lies sure healing for the bruised heart—redemption for all!"

The vast city might be searched from one end to the other for a brighter, more poetic spectacle than Bernarda's atelier presented an hour later. As if by magic, the bare, cold London room was transformed into a garden within garden, parterre within parterre. The blonde, rosy-

cheeked maidens now seated in rows before their embroidery-frames, and models of fresh flowers of richest hue, seemed to mock the place and the season, turning town October into June. The air was fragrant with scents, whilst bright and virginal as these living roses and lilies, and the ideal posies in silk and filose, were the golden braids, coral lips, and blue eyes of these English girls.

The mistress sat at the upper end of the lofty workroom, on an estrade raised above the rows of fair heads, flowers, and embroidery-frames, thus commanding the whole animated scene. But not by position only. Look, carriage, even dress, inspired authority. Whilst her apprentices, whose ages varied from fifteen to twenty, wore colours such as the young love and choose by happy instinct, Bernarda was soberly, although beautifully, dressed in black, relieved by a magnificent gold-and-brown pansy, worn on her breast just above the region of the heart.

The girls often wondered at their mistress's devotion to this especial flower. She never wore any other, and generally contrived to obtain splendid specimens that brightened her dress as a jewel. She was a tall, handsome woman, about thirty-two, with the dark hair, dark-blue eyes, and long silken lashes of a race famous for its beauty; also with a certain piquancy of contour and expression which made her very fascinating, especially to the blonde. Hardly one of the fair, rosy, light-haired Saxons but envied their teacher's raven hair, pearly skin, and dark eyebrows. Yet Bernarda could have no longer seemed young in their eyes. There must, then, have been some hidden charm of manner; some influence due to character, as well as looks; that subdued these careless young things, and made her task of keeping order,

and getting through a proper amount of work, so easy.

As Bernarda's stately figure moved backwards and forwards amid these avenues of bright girls, silken blossoms, and their living prototypes, there was no diminution of the girlish chatter and laughter well held in check. The empty-headed idler was expelled; but, so long as her pupils were sedulous, the mistress encouraged them to talk to each other in undertone. The perpetual chirping, as of so many birds, was a relief, and enabled her to think.

One or two rules, of course, had to be rigidly enforced. Bernarda's handsome brows knit darkly if any new comer forgot the observance of these, and ventured on a suggestion regarding the daily task, or, what the teacher resented much more, any personal remark directed to herself. On this especial morning, however, the entire school sinned in company, and had to be forgiven. As Bernarda sat alone on her raised platform above the rest, the sun, that had hitherto been obscured all the morning, suddenly disentangled itself from clouds—not sufficiently so as to flood the whole room, but just enough to envelope the one black-robed figure, and the white lilies she was busied upon, in warm golden light. The effect was strange and beautiful, and no wonder the young embroiderers seized upon it as an opportunity for unburdening themselves. For a moment every needle rested. Then one sentimentalist, more venturesome than the rest, cried out:

"Please forgive us! We must look at you whilst you sit like a saint in your aureole."

Bernarda smiled impatiently, and continued her own work as if determined for once to be indulgent. Truth to tell, she was herself conscious of a desire to break through routine, to burst this freezing silence.

Calm and dignified although she found her present mode of life, congenial as it was to one enamoured of natural beauty, there were yet moments when she longed to close her atelier and begin life anew.

The incident of the golden ray, now blinding her, and wrapping her round as a vesture, was a vexation, since it made her realise how much she had in common with these careless, restless girls. Was she not also ready to catch at any excuse for wearying of duty, for letting thought stray beyond the limit of actuality? Yes, she

acknowledged that it was so. Life must have more to give than a daily portion of restful toil.

In a moment the sunlight cloud was gone, and another exclamation went the round of the room. On the track of that warm effulgence now came an almost phenomenal gloom, which, like the glory, fastened upon Bernarda where she sat, hemming her round about with subtle cloud as she had before been enthroned in dazzling brightness.

"We cannot see you. Speak to us!" cried the girl who had before been spokeswoman of the rest. "Oh, Miss Burke, good and evil luck will surely visit you to-day."

"Foolish children! I will then hand over the good luck to you!" Bernarda replied with one of her quietly sarcastic smiles. "Go home, all of you, and make what holiday you may in the fog."

The place rang with a merry cheer, and in a few minutes the embroidery-frames were covered up, the baskets piled with gorgeous silks and flosses put away, the flowers carried off to the conservatory; Bernarda found herself alone in the bare, silent, unpictorial room; no blotch of colour left but that brilliant flower of hers, which like a gem, a butterfly, a humming-bird, now pierced the leaden London atmosphere, shining amid the gloom.

She glanced down at her heartsease as she now passed out of the deserted atelier, and readjusted it tenderly. This fairy thing was the only companion of her solitude, ever fresh and perpetually beauteous, renewed day by day as if by magic. Was it not like some undisclosed memories that accompany us wherever we go, perchance saddening but yet beautifying the common ways of life?

And once again she checked the disturbing thoughts that had come unbidden a few hours before.

"What have I to do any more with joys or terrors, prognostics of evil or blissful harbingers? To work, to work! Therein lies healing for the bruised heart, redemption for all!"

#### CHAPTER II. THE CONSERVATOR.

THE gloaming had come, a time Bernarda devoted on fine days to such business as lay out of doors. To-day, however, the heavy cloak of fog that enveloped the streets kept her indoors. It was a pleasant place to walk and think in, this airy, spacious workroom, dimly lighted from

above, and Bernarda's calling gave her much to think about. To-day, as she walked up and down the silent atelier, she was contriving a set of arras destined to carry the fame of her little school across the wide Atlantic. She soon became so absorbed in the pleasing task that she did not hear a gentle tap at the door. Then her young maid-servant intruded with a card in her hand, saying that the bearer awaited an interview.

"Light the lamp in my sitting-room. I will follow at once," Bernarda said carelessly. She was subject to interruptions at this hour, and cards were matters of daily occurrence also. Rich people would call to order or inspect embroidery, parents to apprentice their children, young girls in search of employment, unknown artists to proffer designs. No day without its visitants.

Still dwelling on her arras, and without looking at the card, she went downstairs to the little parlour set aside for her own exclusive use. What a contrast it presented to the spacious, chilly workroom she had just quitted! All here was warm, rich, pictorial. And amid these belongings which seemed part of her, the little piano, handseil of her toil, the books, pictures, and works of art bought with her earnings, she dared to be herself. The black abbess-like gown, with its plain folds, was discarded as soon as her day's work had come to an end, and her pansy now rested on a background as brilliant as itself.

A fire burned brightly in the clean porcelain stove, and the lamp shed abundant light as she entered the room where her visitor waited alone. He stood conspicuous on the hearthrug, with his bared head turned towards the door.

Quick as lightning all things became clear to her, those undefined misgivings, those promptings of hope, the golden cloud, the shadow unutterable!

"Edgeworth!" she cried, and that was all.

She was a very proud woman, and accustomed to exercise self-control. When, without a word more, he bent forward and kissed her on the brow, she still remained calm and collected, though frozen into haughty silence.

The man's composure also seemed for a moment to desert him.

"You had my card? I did not intend to startle you," he said apologetically.

She dropped into a chair, and the un-

heeded card fell from her passive hand. He stooped down, picked it up, and coolly replaced it in his pocket-book. Then, depositing hat and stick on the table, by a matter-of-fact speech he broke the ice.

"Can we talk undisturbed for an hour?" he asked. "I have something to say to you."

"Certainly," Bernarda made reply, almost carelessly, as she handed him a chair. "Pray be easy," she added as she saw him glance at the door; "the only creature in the house is my little maid. You can hear her singing in her kitchen downstairs. If anyone should call, the door-bell will give due warning, and I have but to deny admittance."

He did not look entirely reassured.

"You must still remember our mother-tongue," he said. "Suppose——"

She broke in impatiently, even scornfully:

"No need to use outlandish jargon within these incurious walls. We are perfectly secure from eavesdroppers, I assure you."

The first part of her speech evidently disconcerted him, and before opening his lips again, he perused her steadily. For a brief spell they sat looking at each other.

He was, like herself, strikingly handsome, and the thought must have occurred to others, if it had never struck themselves, how strong was the likeness between the pair. It was a semblance due to race rather than kinship. His temples, like hers, were hidden by raven curls; the dark blue eyes were shaded with long silken lashes; he had the self-same rich, tawny skin, fine features, and kindling, yet disdainful smile. There was, however, a difference no less marked. Whilst Bernarda, although perfectly dignified and self-possessed, was not without a certain proud timidity and almost girlish shyness, due, perhaps, to her solitary life, you saw at a glance that he was something more than a mere man of the world. Speech, demeanour—nay, his very dress, indicated the cosmopolitan and, if not the courtier, at least one familiar with all conditions of society—perhaps the humblest—certainly not the least elevated.

Such things betray themselves in a man's most insignificant action, also that easy self-adaptation, versatility, amiableness, roughly summed up under the head of good manners, but which really mean much more than outward politeness. An adequate share in

the world's graver concerns, the give and take required in the management of public business or the leadership of masses, the necessity men of action are under of keeping their impulses well under control, naturally give them an advantage over those who move in small, circumscribed spheres.

Bernarda realised all this in a moment, and the conviction helped to make her self-reliant. He would not add to her embarrassment. Whatever he had to say would be said kindly, delicately, and with due regard for her feelings. He began with a question, smilingly put.

"Why did you use that expression just now?" he asked. "'Outlandish jargon!' Is it thus you speak of the tongue of your fathers? Have you, then, abjured your country?"

"Oh, our unhappy country," she cried, looking ready to burst into tears; "must we talk of our country? Yet, of course, I know all. Your rôle is no secret."

"Why should it be a secret?" he said, then looked at her as if to read her inmost thoughts. He added in a voice that changed to gentle insinuation: "First we have to talk of ourselves. You are well and prosperous, I see," and he glanced round the warm-tinted, elegant little room approvingly, "but hardly satisfied with such a lot, I feel sure—hardly happy?"

Bernarda's frank, impetuous nature rose up in rebellion against the irony of this speech—an irony that was not intended, she felt sure of that, but that galled nevertheless. Memories fresh and sweet as the flower she wore on her breast lived once more. The youthfulness and fervid hope of a vanished yest'reen came back. One day of life, its best and brightest, seemed to revive.

"Why have you come after all these years?" she cried passionately. "What can it matter to you whether I am happy or not? Speak out. Make known your errand, then go away and let me be."

Her distress evidently troubled him, and rising a second time, he kissed her on the forehead. That kiss, so respectfully, dispassionately accorded, yet evidently intended both as a sign of reconciliation and apology, did not comfort, but at least tended to calm her. It served to bring with sudden force the difference between his condition of mind and her own. They had loved each other passionately once, and now met suddenly after fateful years. Yet whilst the very sound of his

voice calling her by name, and the touch of his hand, could bring back the past that had been his and her own, could make this estrangement seem unreal and impossible, he remained calm and almost indifferent. The conviction forced her back on her womanly pride. She determined, no matter at what present cost to herself, to appear calm and indifferent too.

"I will tell you why I have come," he began, stooping to pick up the light shawl she had thrown round her shoulders, adjusting it with prompt care for her comfort, yet without the slightest trace of tenderness in the act. He saw that in spite of the warmth of the room, his sudden apparition had made her tremble—that was all. "Years ago I did you a great wrong," he went on, fixing his dark, penetrating eyes upon her. "Poor, obscure, and friendless, I then promised to marry you, and broke my troth. Rich, famous"—here he smiled an odd, yet winning smile—"abounding in friends and followers, I am here to redeem it. My errand to-day is to offer you my fortunes and my name."

She was too much overtaken by surprise to make any answer. He went on in the same prosaic, straightforward, friendly way, no vestige of lover-like enthusiasm or demonstrativeness in voice, look, or manner, yet a keen desire to gain his point evidently actuating each syllable.

"You protested at one time that you fully and freely forgave me. A proud, high-spirited woman could not feel otherwise. But in spite of these silent years, I have never forgotten the past, and have never forgiven myself. Pray believe that."

"It was a wild dream. Let us forget it," Bernarda said, stirred to hidden depths by his strange indifference, and still stranger fervour. Since it was plain that his love for her was a forgotten thing, certainly no joy, hardly a memory any longer, why then had he come with this word "marriage" on his lips?

They sat looking at each other, these two who had once been lovers, with hardly as they once fancied in their fond foolish exaltation, any secrets between them, any separate interests possible, no matter in what remote future; and now, after ten brief years, utter strangers could hardly be so wide apart. But the saddest experience of all was the conviction that this blank, awful separation, this wall of granite which seemed to crush the very breath of life out of her, was scarcely perceptible to him.

He was self-controlled, pleasant, persuasive, without an effort, without apparently an emotion.

"There will be time enough to talk over the past, ample leisure for explanation on both sides," he said, smiling, and there was wonderful fascination in the smile that lit up his dark face, "if you will only marry me. Give your assent then, Bernarda; throw in your lot with that of the conspirator!"

## THE OLD FRENCH THEATRE.

### IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

WE owe the term, "*le siècle de Louis Quatorze*," to Voltaire. It was the golden age of literature in France, and a large share of the honour belongs to the dramatists. Corneille, Molière, and Racine—contemporaries as a matter of fact—are foremost on the list; they excelled all other playwrights before their time; and in the opinion of those best qualified to judge have not yet been surpassed.

Pierre Corneille was born at Rouen, in 1606. His first play, *Mélite*, appeared in 1629. As this was thought to be superior to most comedies of the time, the young man was much gratified, and gave up the law for the theatre. We have Corneille's own authority for saying that he found his new profession remunerative, and also that he took a pride in it. He must have worked hard and fast, for before the end of the year 1636 he had produced eight comedies and one tragedy, all of five acts and in verse. His reputation stood high; but the thorn in his rose was the proud spirit of Richelieu. Hitherto, the thorn had only scratched him, as he was enjoying the pleasures of the flower-bed. Corneille was one of the five authors whom the Cardinal Minister paid to write plays for him. He supplied them with a plot—not of his own invention—and set them all to work upon it; each to write one act. A worse way of writing a play can hardly be imagined; but Richelieu was ignorant, and self-opinionated in these things. On one occasion Corneille differed from his colleagues, and did not obey the order. The great man waxed very wroth, but had to swallow his discontent. We should much like to know the ins and outs of all that passed. There followed a battle, fought with very different weapons. Quite at the end of 1636, Corneille's tragedy, *Le Cid*, was first acted, and at once became more loudly popular than any play

before its time. Richelieu had shown that he was anxious about those plays which he had helped to manufacture, for there is reason to believe that he did not confine himself merely to giving instructions; but all his efforts failed, and he knew of the failure. It is hardly to be wondered at, that he was annoyed at Corneille's triumph. He was an ambitious man, and felt that the power of literature was gradually growing stronger. He insisted that the French Academy, which had only just come into existence, should publicly criticise the play. This was unfair towards Corneille, because he could not but be aware that the members, who had chosen him as their Protector, knew what his opinions were.

As we have said, the groundwork of the *Cid* is wholly Spanish, but the beautiful poetry of many of the lines is wholly Corneille's. And had Corneille been allowed to follow his own instincts, and write his play as his spirit moved him, it would probably be free from many of its absurdities. He was bound to observe the laws of "the three unities," which the French pedants of those days thought necessary to make incumbent upon everyone who wrote for the stage. These ignorantly learned men imagined that Aristotle on his own authority had promulgated laws to be observed in the composition of a dramatic poem, and that they should be always binding. The events in every play were to be comprised within twenty-four hours, the scene could not be changed, and in the play there should be only one interest or one line of action.

These laws were as the sword of Damocles held over the heads of the French dramatists, as they sat at their work. Richelieu had lent his voice in favour of the edict, and they dreaded being found guilty of insubordination. The authority of Aristotle was too high to be questioned; and because the Greek writers had so written, they must be followed. The great Condé expressed himself as being terribly bored by a tragedy, by the Abbé d'Aubignac. A friend of the author tried to excuse the play, saying that it was written exactly after the precepts of Aristotle. Condé replied: "I am charmed that the Abbé d'Aubignac should have followed Aristotle so carefully; but I cannot forgive Aristotle for having made the Abbé d'Aubignac write such a detestable tragedy!"

La Fontaine was surely right when he said:

N'attendez rien de bon d'un peuple imitateur,

La pire espèce, c'est l'auteur.

Corneille did not like these rules, and they had a baneful effect upon him. "The rule of the twenty-four hours," as it was called, was the most thought of; and it is generally supposed that was first put in practice in the *Sophonisbe* of Mairêt, in 1629. To Mairêt we owe also the comedy, *Les Galanteries du Duc d'Ossone*.

The other principal writers for the theatre, about this time, were Rotrou, Georges de Scudéry, Du Ryer, Boisrobert, Desmarets, Cyrano de Bergerac, and Thomas Corneille, born nineteen years later than his more celebrated brother. His first play was produced in 1647. Rotrou's name is honourably known, and is remembered because he died of the plague, while attending to the sick. He was the only writer of tragedy who at all approached Pierre Corneille; his best plays are *Venceslas* and *Saint Genest*. Georges de Scudéry was a voluminous writer of rubbish; a man with the manners of a *Parolles*, though with more courage. Du Ryer wrote a lot of plays, which were enjoyed by his contemporaries: *Scévole*, and *Les Vendanges de Suresne* may be chosen. Boisrobert was a factotum jester to Richelieu. It was he who first told Richelieu of the private meetings of nine or ten men of letters; from which little circle the Cardinal made the French Academy. Boisrobert was one of Richelieu's five paid authors. Though he had taken orders, he thought only of his pleasures; he led a licentious life, and was seen more frequently in the theatre than in church. Among his plays may be mentioned *La Belle Plaideuse*, *La Cassandre*, and *Les Généreux Ennemis*. Desmarets, though not one of Richelieu's five authors, was more closely connected than any of them with his literary ambition. By the Cardinal's orders he wrote plays, to which the minister contributed some verses. Desmarets's own play, *Les Visionnaires*, for which he alone was responsible, had a great success. Cyrano de Bergerac had a reputation for audacious burlesque; he wrote for the theatre only two plays, *Agrippine*, and *Le Pédant Joué*. To this latter play we owe Molière's saying: "On reprend son bien où on le trouve." For in *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, Molière had reclaimed from Cyrano his own famous: "Que diable

allait-il faire dans cette galère!" It is not generally known that this was only an act of reprisal.

It is strange, and an ungracious thing to have to say, that Pierre Corneille owes his great reputation to the *Cid*, and to the four or five subsequent plays; though, after these, he wrote eighteen others. Mr. Hawkins pleads for *Rodogune*—we are allowing it in the number—and calls it an "exquisite tragedy." After the *Cid* (1636), Corneille's three next tragedies were *Horace*, *Cinna*, and *Polyeucte*. M. Marty-Laveaux, the editor of the large edition of Corneille's works, published by Messrs. Hachette, says (Vol. III., p. 468) that all of these three plays were first performed in 1640. Then followed *Pompée*, in 1641—this is not one of the best plays—and a comedy, *Le Menteur*, in 1642. *Rodogune* was in 1644. Between this date and 1674, when Corneille wrote his last play, there was not only not one piece nearly equal to any of the first four, but there was no piece that did not detract from his former well-won glory. Parts of *Le Menteur* are charming; though to our minds even the acting of Delaunay as *Dorante*, and Got as *Cliton*, does not relieve the play of a feeling of weariness which we find frequently in Corneille. But we must remember that he has written four tragedies which Frenchmen believe will last as long as the French language.

For over thirty years Corneille had no rival as a writer of tragedies, and for eight or ten years his fame was at its zenith. It was during the early years of his success that he married. Almost immediately after his wedding he was taken so ill that it was believed he was dead. The news flew from Rouen to Paris, and verses were written in Latin deploring his loss. Happily, other verses were soon written extolling his resurrection.

People will judge of Corneille as they do other men, by their own sympathies. For our own part we are inclined, on the whole, to place *Polyeucte* as the highest of his plays. *Horace* has fine bursts of poetry, quite in Corneille's best style, and the tone of the play is ennobling. We have here the famous "Qu'il mourût," and also *Camilla's* curse pronounced on Rome as having been the cause of her lover's death. In *Polyeucte* the action is better sustained throughout, and in this play we are made acquainted with *Pauline*, certainly the most truly womanly of all Corneille's female characters. During

his own lifetime his women were spoken of, in a complimentary way, as "adorables furies"—a sort of creature that palls upon us very soon. Passionate talking and ideas of loud revenge will not alone give much charm to a reader. And though the language in which they express their thoughts be perfect of its kind, that does not really make or mar the character. Elegant writing will do very much, but it cannot make a good tragedy.

But in our eyes, Corneille's worst fault is dulness. If this be true, it is of all faults the most fatal. In a preface to one of his own plays, Voltaire tells us that every mode of writing is good, save that of the dull sort. Corneille writes too often as though he were arguing a theory of state government, or as though he were pleading a cause before a judge. Both may be perfectly admissible, but Corneille forgets that he is addressing an audience in the theatre. His theory or his argument may be the best in the world, but his audience does not want it. If a dramatist were to write a tragedy, in the second act of which a man was murdered, and the third act contained long arguments for and against the abolition of capital punishment, no single listener would thank him for his eloquence. Such was a fault into which Corneille would be likely to fall. His heroes and heroines seem too often to be working out a principle of logic or of duty, instead of letting themselves be actuated by their natural sentiments. They seem to be saying to themselves too often, "Now, what would I do if So-and-so were looking at me." On the other hand, in Corneille's plays we see many instances of the hearty and chivalrous spirit which we are taught to believe was more common among the nobles and men of distinction in those times than in later years. Under Richelieu the warlike temperament of the Ligueurs of the last century had not died out, and a good example to energy and manly spirit was set by Henri Quatre, the most popular of all French kings. Those of us who may have read Alfred de Vigny's novel, *Cinq Mars*, or Dumas's *Les Trois Mousquetaires*, will have found—some due allowance being made for romance, especially in the latter instance—pictures of the prevailing spirit of the time. And if we can read Corneille's plays with these somewhat high-flown ideas present before us, we shall perhaps put ourselves in the best position to appreciate them. He

had a high, proud, and independent nature, and he said of himself truly enough that he was under obligations to no man for any part of his success. His was, at any rate, a character that we honour and respect.

As years went on Corneille still continued to write tragedies, and they were accepted at the theatre, though with a diminishing eagerness on the part of the actors. He said, two or three times, that he meant to give up writing for the stage, but reconsidered his decision, probably from pecuniary considerations. He had two sons, whom he put into the army, and they were an expense to him. Once when he did for a time renounce the drama, he occupied himself by making a translation into verse of the *De Imitatione Christi*, and, pecuniarily, this was very satisfactory. He is reported to have been delighted with the success of his new venture. But in his last years he was a very poor man. Boileau, who piqued himself upon not taking money for his poems, used to sneer at Corneille because he demanded what was his due; but when Boileau knew in what straits his friend was, he requested that his pension, which he enjoyed as a man of letters, might be given to the aged dramatist. Pierre Corneille was not chosen a member of the French Academy until 1647, more than ten years after the *Cid* had appeared; and M. Taschereau, his biographer, tells us that his speech on the day of his reception "might certainly be quoted as one of the worst of its kind, if it did not redeem itself by the rare merit of being very short." Poor Corneille was not made for this sort of eloquence!

Molière was born in 1622, sixteen years after the birth of Corneille. His father was an upholsterer in Paris, and was one of the *valets-tapisier* to the King. This appointment Molière secured in 1660, after having abandoned it to his younger brother, finding that the office would be of service to him. The family name was Poquelin, and to Jean Baptiste Poquelin, Molière added the name by which all the world now knows him. Why he chose that name is still a mystery. His father wanted him to go into his own business, but the lad wished to be educated. He was sent to the Collège de Clermont, and, under the Jesuits, made rapid progress in his studies. He went to Orleans and read philosophy under Gassendi. It is probable that he was called to the bar at Orleans in the year 1643. He came to Paris, tried to



practise at the bar, but had no success. As we have seen, Corneille also forsook the grave study of the law for the theatre. As a boy, young Poquelin had been often taken to the theatre by his maternal grandfather, and had thoroughly enjoyed all that he had seen. Now that he was to make his way in the world his heart yearned for the stage. His father was much grieved, but it was to no purpose that he used all his eloquence to dissuade him. On his return from Orleans, Poquelin spent much of his time at the theatres, and it was then that he took lessons from the Italian actor, Tiberio Fiorelli, popularly known as Scaramouche. Poquelin also became intimately acquainted with a small set of persons who, like himself, wished to set up a theatre and play before the public. In this little company there were four actors belonging to the Béjard family. They were Joseph, Louis, Madeleine, and Geneviève, all children of Joseph Béjard and Marie Hervé, his wife. It was about this time that the future poet made the change in his name. Molière very soon came to be considered the captain of the little troupe. He was held responsible for their debts, and because he could not pay them was put into prison. The company rejoiced in the name of the "Illustre Théâtre." They tried their success in Paris from 1643 to 1646, at first acting gratis, and soon afterwards demanding a money payment. But the public probably found greater theatrical attractions elsewhere. They then thought they had better try what they could do in the provinces. So they started on their wanderings in the early part of 1647. During the next eleven years or more they visited the principal towns in France. They went three times to Lyons, and there, in 1653, Molière brought out *L'Étourdi*, his first regular comedy in verse. At last, on the 3rd of November, 1658, they began to play before the public in Paris. On the 24th of October previous, Molière and his company had been allowed to give a special representation before the King, and Monsieur—the King's brother—and other members of the Court. Until 1661, the new troupe of players gave their performances in a room which, by royal favour, they shared with the Italian company then in Paris, each company playing on alternate evenings. In February, 1661, Molière's troupe went to the Palais Royal Theatre, and remained there until his death, in February, 1673. During all this time Molière was the chief manager; he

was the head man, and arbiter in all matters of dispute. And we have the satisfaction of knowing that he was honoured and respected by his comrades.

In making a short estimate of Molière's comedies, we must, of course, confine our views to their main features. We do not believe that he was endowed with imaginative powers of the first order, as was Shakespeare or Goethe, nor was his nature at all transcendental. What he saw, he saw very clearly. He felt that he was firm on his own ground. He was a man of the world, had strong and shrewd common-sense, and all manner of pretence was hateful to him. Most of his plays are satires against the humbugs of the world; and of him it may be said truly, "*castigat ridendo mores*." Molière had a power of throwing fun into his incidents and into the mouths of his personages, which, it is generally allowed, has not been equalled by any other writer of plays. He is rarely altogether farcical. We are inclined to agree with Boileau in condemning the dénouement of the *Fourberies de Scapin*, but we also agree with Boileau when he says that, even in the lightest of Molière's comedies, there is always something to learn. Molière was essentially a dramatist. He threw out easily what he had to say, he spoke always to the point, and he always made his dialogue subservient to the story of his play. No dialogue can run more smoothly than his, and, at the same time, every line spoken advances the action of the piece, either in telling the story or in elucidating some point of character. We think that another sign of Molière's genius is that he was able to put into the mouths of his personages such words as men and women in those positions would be likely to speak, while all his typical characters have got their own features peculiar to themselves. We therefore see distinctness and individuality of character. We may put in here a remark of Diderot's: "If anyone thinks there are many more men capable of writing *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* than *Le Misanthrope*, he is mistaken." As an actor of comedy all accounts agree in saying that he was particularly good. He took great pains with his elocution, studying beforehand how he would speak his words, convinced that he ought to leave nothing to the chance inspiration of the moment. It was said of him shortly after his death by a contemporary: "He was an actor all over from head to foot, it seemed as if he

had several voices. Everything spoke in him; and by a step, by a smile, by a wink of the eye, he made one imagine more than the greatest talker would have done in an hour." He took the principal part in nearly all his plays, and we may consider it a proof of his versatility that he should have acted such very different characters in a manner that pleased the audience. The Mascarilles, the Sganarelles, M. Jourdain, Orgon, and Alceste, were all acted by him.

The unhappy part of Molière's life was his relations with his wife. She, Armande Béjard, was the sister of those Béjards whom Molière had joined years ago when they were acting in Paris, and when they formed the troupe of the *Illustre Théâtre*. The date of her birth has not been ascertained, but as near as can be judged it took place towards the end of 1642, or early in 1643. She and Molière were married on the 20th February, 1662, she being then nineteen years old, and he forty. Armande was pretty, and her manners were fascinating. Her portrait, we are told, is traced in the ninth scene of the third act of the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. Molière was extremely fond of her, and could not restrain his affection. With a man of his loving nature it was impossible but that his home should have been very wretched. They were totally unsuited for each other. She was extravagant, was vain, and more than once unfaithful to her husband. He had tried to live apart from her, seeing her only at the theatre—for after her marriage she became one of the troupe—but no real separation took place. He was unwilling to make public the quarrel between himself and his wife, and except when he was at Auteuil, where he had taken an apartment, they both lived in the same house in Paris, he in his rooms, and she in hers. They had two sons and one daughter. The two boys died quite in their infancy. The girl, *Esprit-Madeleine*, born in 1665, lived, and in 1705, after her mother's death (in 1700), married a M. de Montalant. They had no children. Molière died on the 17th February, 1673, shortly after the fourth representation of his comedy, *La Malade Imaginaire*. During the performance he was taken ill, and with difficulty got through the part. He died of inflammation of the lungs.

One of the best trusted actors in Molière's troupe was Charles Varlet La Grange. He was the *jeune premier* of the

company, and though Molière's lovers are to us among the least interesting of his personages, La Grange was usually well received. He has another especial claim to our attention. From Molière's first appearance in Paris in the autumn of 1658, La Grange kept a daily register of what pieces were played every day by the troupe, and noted down also what were the receipts taken at the door. Other information is also given, but these two points are the most important. It is mainly with reference to Molière's own comedies that this book is valuable to us, for during the whole of the fourteen years that he was director of his theatre in Paris, he did not bring out more than fifteen new plays that were not his own. The total number of his own plays is thirty-four, though some of these he would not have written unless commanded to do so by the King. They were better adapted for gala representations before the Court than to be played on the boards of a public theatre. And it may be said also that for the performance of tragedy Molière's company were known to be inferior to their rivals at the *Hôtel de Bourgogne*. Molière, however, had the honour of bringing out the first of Racine's plays, the *Thébaïde*. This had fifteen representations. He also brought out Racine's second tragedy, *Alexandre le Grand*. And hence arose a quarrel between the two poets, in which the wrong was wholly and unmistakably on the side of Racine. His tragedy had been played at the *Palais Royal* theatre six times, and then because he thought that his play was not acted well enough, he caused it to be brought out at a rival theatre at the same time that it was being performed by the company with whom he had come to terms; and this without giving them any intimation of what he was doing. Racine's vanity as a young author was touched at what he thought was the indifferent acting of his piece—it is probable that this was in truth the case—and in his anger he was prompted by a sudden impulse, caused by his own sensitiveness, a failing which he retained to the end of his life.

Racine was born in 1639—about the same number of years after Molière as Molière had been born after Corneille—and died in 1699. When a boy he was brought up by the *Solitaires* of Port-Royal, and as far as book-learning went, he profited by this instruction; had he been able to learn their gentleness of spirit,

it had been better for him. But we do not wish now to speak evil of Racine. It may have been his fault or his misfortune that he was too touchy, too thin-skinned; we may recollect, however, that had his nature been less sensitive, his poetry would probably have lacked some of its most delicate and distinctive characteristics. Racine expresses himself always with great clearness, and his meaning may be gathered instantly from his words. When young he had all the tastes and literary perceptions of a scholar. In this he was in advance of his Port-Royalist teachers. Lancelot and Nicole were men who led a monkish life, and it was nowise their ambition to seek after elegant scholarship. They were sound grammarians, who taught earnestly and conscientiously the pupils entrusted to their care. Racine's predilection was for Greek, and those of his plays that relate to the stories in Greek mythology are generally accounted his best. Voltaire seems to give the highest praise to *Iphigénie*, but modern opinion is in favour of *Phèdre*, as being upon the whole Racine's most perfect tragedy. We recollect G. H. Lewes, a good dramatic critic, telling us that of all Racine's characters, he placed highest *Hermione* in *Andromaque*. And those who know Racine well may find that in *Athalie* the incident and conduct of the drama is better arranged than in his other tragedies. The interest here is not confined to one or two personages. We have four characters, on all of whom the weight of the piece is made to lean. If it is fortunate for Racine that we cannot easily determine which is his best tragedy, it is, perhaps, equally fortunate that we can name his worst. It is *Bérénice*. Racine wrote one comedy, *Les Plaideurs* (*The Litigants*), which he borrowed from *The Wasps* of *Aristophanes*. It is undoubtedly amusing, but the wit is not seen readily, and the piece is of a mongrel kind. The language is that of comedy, but the fun is nearly all farcical.

It is not very easy to gauge Racine's powers, and say what are the most distinctive features we see in his plays. Frenchmen say that Racine was "tendre." We must confess our inability to understand the word. Is it tender, or affectionate, or soft-hearted? We believe the word is misapplied. It has got into currency, and is therefore used. Racine had the power of putting into the mouths of his personages such

words as express their feelings very aptly; and therefore, because the object of all tragedy is to show terror and pity by the effect it produces, Racine has been called "tendre"! In England we call him "cold." That epithet is as ill-chosen as the other. A dramatist may write in verse, and yet not be a poet. We do not say this is the case with Racine, but we think his lines do not usually show the strong instinctive feeling of poetry which longs to express itself in verse. We hear that Boileau taught Racine how to write difficult verses easily—that is, to make them appear easy. If the tradition is true, the pupil profited by the instruction. It is not necessary for us now to determine why Racine chose to leave off writing for the stage. The common idea that he was converted to religion, and thought the theatre a pernicious amusement, is to us too far-fetched to be wholly credible. Religious motives, perhaps, had something to do with it, but other reasons must have operated with him. It is as difficult to determine another less important point—the cause of his disfavour at Court towards the end of his life. He did fall into disfavour, certainly, but the story has probably been somewhat exaggerated.

Louis the Fourteenth was fond of the theatre until he was forty years of age. At that time he was surfeited with pleasures, and had become blasé. For the first twenty years of his reign, he felt a pride in the men who had put a halo of glory over the country. He asked Boileau one day, who was "le plus rare" of the great writers who then honoured his reign. Boileau answered at once: "Sire, c'est Molière." The King replied: "I should not have thought so; but you are a better judge than I am." The natural instincts of Louis the Fourteenth in literary matters were not bad. They were probably not profound; but, so far as they went, he had a capability for seeing truly. It is certain that in many theatrical performances before the Court his opinion was eagerly sought after. His judgment was generally better than that of his courtiers, and more than once, after they had expressed their disapproval of a play, they changed their minds because the monarch, who had been slow to say what he thought, had thought well of it. Such was the case with Racine's comedy, *Les Plaideurs*, and with Molière's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. Without the protection of Louis the Fourteenth, Molière's

Tartuffe might never have been allowed on the stage during its author's lifetime.

We have said nothing of the minor French dramatists of the seventeenth century, for we have thought it better to keep to the main high-road and confine our few remarks to well-known names. Had we gone into the bye-ways and spoken of the theatre as illustrated by the second-class writers, the subject, taken altogether, would have been too large in the space at our disposal either to write about or to be read with satisfaction.

From the commencement of the *Comédie Française*, in 1680, to the year 1700, we find that on the public theatre in Paris—it will be recollected that there was then only one theatre—of Corneille's plays there were altogether nine hundred and one representations; of Molière's, two thousand three hundred and fifty; and of Racine's, seven hundred and fifty-six. Corneille's *Cid* was his only play performed more than one hundred times; Molière's *Tartuffe* was his highest—one hundred and eighty-one; then his *Misanthrope*, one hundred and fifty. Racine's comedy, *Les Plaideurs*, was his highest—one hundred and twenty-eight; then his *Phèdre*, one hundred and fourteen; then *Andromaque*, one hundred and eleven. Before the Court, Molière had altogether one hundred and ninety-three representations during that period; Corneille, one hundred and twenty-seven; and Racine, one hundred and twenty-three. We must recollect, however, as between Corneille and Racine, that nineteen plays of the older author are represented, but only ten of his later rival; the advantage, therefore, would seem to be in Racine's favour.

Here our incomplete sketch of a most interesting period must come to an end. All who are interested in the old French stage will do well to study the subject in Mr. Hawkins's volumes, which are as amusing as they are painstaking and accurate—and that is high praise.

#### LAUREL.

A PICTURED face, in frame of gold,  
Large, tender eyes, and forehead bold,  
And firm, unflinching mouth;  
A face that tells of mingled birth—  
The calmness of the northern earth,  
The passion of the south!

The one face in the world to me,  
The face I never more shall see  
Until God's kingdom come!  
Oh, tender eyes! oh, firm strong lips!  
What comfort in my life's eclipse?  
What succour? Ye are dumb!

I brought the blossoms of the spring  
To deck my true love's offering,  
While he was far away:  
With rose's bloom, with pansy's grace,  
I wreathed the well-beloved face;  
I have no flowers to-day.

But laurel, laurel for my brave,  
My hero lying in his grave  
Upon that foreign sod!  
He passed amid the crash of guns,  
Beyond the farthest sun of suns,  
A kingly soul, to God!

He died upon the battle-field,  
He knew not, he, to fly nor yield,  
Bold Britain's worthy son!  
And I will wreath his laurel crown,  
Although the bitter tears run down—  
I was his chosen one.

He loved his country, so did I;  
He parted forth to do or die,  
And I—I let him go;  
Oh dear, dear land! we gave thee all,  
God bless the banner, and the pall,  
God help the mourner's woe!

I hear the bells ring loud and sweet,  
I hear the shouting in the street,  
For joy of victory;  
The very children cease their play,  
To babble of the victor's bay,  
And pennons flutter free.

I hear the vivas long and loud,  
As they ride onward through the crowd,  
His comrades bold and brave;  
The shouts of triumph rend the air,  
Oh, he must hear them lying there,  
My hero in his grave!

I do not grudge thee, darling mine!  
I, the last daughter of a line  
Whose warrior blood ran free  
Upon the battle-fields of old;  
Thou wast not mine to have and hold,  
The land had need of thee.

I do not grudge thee; I shall smile  
Beloved, in a little while,  
And glory in thy name;  
I hold love's laurel in my hand,  
But take thou from the grateful land  
Thy wreath of deathless fame!

#### ON THE ROAD.

IN spite of the necessary decadence of the road as a means of communication for business-folk since the introduction of railways, there are still many more people who may be said to live by it, and on it, than dwellers in great towns can believe. In every community there is a certain proportion of beings "restless, unfixed in principles and place," to whom the notion of remaining bound down to one given spot for any length of time is not only abhorrent, but intolerable. Many of them follow callings which are eminently respectable, if by the epithet "respectable" we are to understand honesty, sobriety, and industry. On the other hand, there are many who are simply pariahs of society—men who have long since cut adrift all

ties binding them to home and relations; whose hands are against every man's, and against whom are the hands of every man; whose lives are unsavoury romances; whose existences are essentially bound up with the present, without a care or a thought for the future.

The railway robbed the road of what may be called its aristocratic professionals—the commercial travellers, the coach-drivers, and guards, and, we must unwillingly add, the highwaymen, although the latter were, in spite of their swagger and show, but sorry cowards who ran no risks, worked only with the odds in their favour, and whose highest accomplishment was the development of their faculty for running away; but it is strange to find so many hundreds of their humbler brethren still running, or rather walking, in the old grooves of life, still preserving old idiosyncrasies, as if the road were yet a power in the land. Of the aristocrats, indeed, the "commercial" alone exists in any shape, on or off the road. Very few haggmen now use the road in proportion to the old numbers, and with the changed character of the age, the character of the haggman has changed. As a man he is a very superior being to his predecessor, but business competition nowadays is so keen that he has no time to be anything but a man of business, and the old dashing, bibulous, practical-joking commercial is as extinct as the Iguanodon. Pleasure enters very little into the daily routine of his life; he must live well in order to secure the special privileges and accommodation afforded him at hotels, and to sustain him in the exceedingly arduous nature of his calling; but the old fun and camaraderie of the profession has disappeared with the old fun and camaraderie of the road. The commercial-room of the present day might be a merchant's office, except during the dinner-hour. The gentlemen dine, and honour the time-hallowed toasts; but, the repast ended, there is a rush for the writing-tables, and nothing but the sound of scratching pens is to be heard. Trains are not snowed-up, or railway-lines made useless, as coaches and roads frequently were in the old days, so that not even by accident does the modern "com." often get a chance of acting up to the traditions of his calling by spending a jovial evening.

The modern professionals of the road belong rather to the amusement-catering callings than to those connected with

serious business; and even of the latter, many make little more than a show in order to avoid the sweeping local edicts concerning "vagrom-men."

Circuses, from their peculiar character, generally travel by road, and we imagine that a volume written, say by Mr. Sanger, would be a vast deal more amusing and instructive than many books ostentatiously published for amusement and instruction. The apparition of one of these vast travelling caravanserais in a remote country road is full of suggestiveness to the imaginative mind, especially if it be seen from some distance. The weird appearance of camels and elephants stalking along amidst green trees, almost makes us fancy for the moment that we are in that England when, if we are to believe a certain school of scientists, the climate was tropical, and of which the denizens of the African jungle and desert were prolific inhabitants. The gorgeous cars seen from a distance might be twisted into the likeness of one of those imposing processions by which the artful old abbots and Church dignitaries imposed so easily upon the minds of simple country-folk. The illusion, of course, is destroyed directly we come face to face with the African lion-tamer, clad in a suit of corduroys, and smoking a clay-pipe, and when we hear a few sentences proceed from the mouth of the Empress of the Golden Isles; but it is sufficiently imposing from a distance.

Acrobats, Punch and Judy men, German bands, and organ-grinders traverse the great roads of our country districts to an enormous extent, as anyone knows who is much in the habit of exploring them. To anyone accustomed to the ordinary comforts and luxuries of life, such an existence in all weathers and under all circumstances appears intolerable. Yet it may be noted that, so far from being a jaded, downcast crew, these road-professionals are as jolly and contented as was Chaucer's famous company of pilgrims. Their expenses are little or nothing; they are completely their own masters; a strict bond of freemasonry exists amongst them; they have their own houses of call; their routes are mapped out with method, certain places being visited at certain times—these times being nicely calculated so that the journey may be rewarded with success. The gradual disappearance of the old English pleasure-fair has taken a great deal of bread out of the mouths of these folk, and the market-days of country towns are

but poor substitutes. The dates of country fairs were as accurately known amongst the travelling professions as are the dates of birthdays in families, and it may be imagined that no little care was necessary in the preparation of the year's campaign to ensure attendance at as many of these festivals as possible. We may wonder, when we see these men at such fairs as remain, where they come from; but if we were to question one of them, we should discover him to be a complete walking almanack of such events in every part of the country.

In spite of the wondrous changes which have passed over our country during the last half-century, the pedlar of old days still flourishes, and Autolycus is by no means an extinct being. He may still be seen progressing slowly along the cottage rows of village streets, calling at house after house with his oilskin-cased basket containing the very same collection of worthless gew-gaws which have been the peculiar stock-in-trade of pedlars from all time.

He is still regarded as an oracle and newsman, for, although villages nowadays mostly have their clubs and reading-rooms, there are many people who never see a newspaper, who would not be interested by it if they did see it, and who are far more ready to hear the last piece of gossip or scandal from the next village than the most startling piece of news from the greater world without. He is often a rogue, but he is a capital road-companion, inasmuch as it is as much his business to keep himself au courant with what is going on, as it is to sell cheap jewellery and fancy ribbons; and, as the success of his calling depends to no small extent upon his command of the "gift of the gab," he is never dull company.

Another very flourishing professional wanderer is the gatherer of simples, or, as he calls himself, the herbalist. The conservatism of our country folk, in the matter of medicine, comprises, it may be said, almost all their conservatism. They are beginning to regard ghosts and bogles as stuff and nonsense; they have learnt to be moderate in their estimation of the Londoner, regarding him as neither a very marvellous nor a very terrible being; they have forgotten their old customs to a very great extent, and their old songs entirely; but to a wonderful extent they believe in the efficacy of the remedies handed down almost unchanged from the

days when the monks were the sole depositories of medical and surgical knowledge. Our simple-gatherer is, therefore, a sort of doctor in his way. He believes firmly that apoplexy, paralysis, gout, and rheumatism are to be alienated by use of wall-flowers; that the Canterbury-bell or throte-wort is good for swellings and inflammations of the throat; that golden rod stops blood-flow; that Jesuit's bark cures ague; that the "golden water," made from lilies-of-the-valley, is good to strengthen the limbs of children; that red valerian, peony, and columbine are invaluable—peony in especial hastening the growth of children's teeth, its dried roots being tied round their necks.

He can tell us all about the carminative hot and cold seeds, the opening roots, the emollient herbs, the capillary herbs, the sudorific woods, the cordial flowers, the vast list of flowers and roots which cure diseases of corresponding form—such as nettle-tea for nettle-rash, worm root for lunacy, liver wort for liver complaints, saffron-flowers for scarlet-fever. He works hard, early and late; for his occupation necessitates a good deal of trespassing. Long before the woodman has shouldered his axe, and started for the copses, the gatherer of simples may be seen creeping along the banks of sedgy streams, or knee-deep in the grass and flowers of pleasant fields, or groping along hedgerows, or pushing his way through thick undergrowth, always in a shamefaced sort of way; for his chief enemy, the keeper, cannot be persuaded that a man carrying a stout stick and a basket is not after rabbits or any other marketable creature that comes handy.

Strange to say, most of these wanderers hail from the great metropolis. We have met them in the most unlikely places, at the most out-of-the-way spots. A German bandsman has importuned us for a contribution under the very shadow of the great gateway of the once famous house of Our Lady of Walsingham. He and his companions, scarcely able to express themselves in English, had been on the tramp over East Anglia for a month, and were then going due West. We have heard the unmistakable accent of an East London pedlar within a stone's throw of Hadrian's Wall, at a once famous inn known as The Twice Brewed, standing on the military road between Carlisle and Newcastle. We have met Punch and Judy crossing that wild expanse of fell country which lies

between Allendale town and Alston in Cumberland, the box in which Punch and Company travelled being a Bermondsey haddock-case. We have heard a music-hall ditty, which three weeks before was being howled and whistled by every London gamin, shouted forth in the quiet street of a Dartmoor village by a gentleman who must have been a lineal descendant of the travelling chapmen and ballad-mongers of old time, such a curious sheaf of old ditties had he under his arm. But the retailer of ballads is a rare object nowadays. Music is a cheap and frequent taste, and the village youths who used to pass their leisure time in ringing grandsire bobs and triple-majors in the church steeple, are now drilled into the execution of glees and madrigals by the parson and his lady folk.

The professional tramp is an entirely distinct being from any road wanderers hitherto named. From his title one would imagine that he amongst all of them would be the greatest traveller. Such, however, is not the case. Miserable wretch as he looks, he has a very keen eye to personal convenience and comfort, and it may be noted that he is rarely to be met with in outlandish counties, or very far from a main road. He bears, in fact, the same relation to other knights of the road that the captain of a coasting vessel bears to the merchant skipper, who wanders all over the globe, and who does not know until he arrives at a port where next he may go. As a rule, he confines himself to certain districts lying between certain "houses"—i.e., unions, with the character of which he is thoroughly well acquainted. He is always on the tramp, but although in his peculiar limping mode of progression he covers more miles of road in a day than his personal appearance would warrant us in believing him capable of performing, he sees a very small circle of country in proportion to the time he occupies "on business." As often as not he confines himself to a certain country or a certain round of parishes; the spirit of adventure and exploration is not strong within him, and he very much prefers monotony with certain results, to variety with uncertainty. The same custom is apparent amongst those itinerant vendors of basket-work and cheap hardware, who are generically known as "gipsies," although in nine cases out of ten they have not a drop of true Romany blood in their veins, and whose wheeled houses are such objects of envy and mystery to the youthful mind. They confine their

movements to certain roads, which they traverse at certain seasons, and may be observed to pass particular places at almost mathematically regular intervals. We once came across a basket-cart belonging to John Wild, of Marden, Kent, in the midst of Salisbury Plain, but it was an exceptional occurrence, probably arising from the fact that John Wild had been infringing the eighth commandment somewhere in his usual district, and was travelling "abroad" from motives of personal convenience.

One question to which we have never had an entirely satisfactory answer is, What becomes of all these nomad folk during the long months of winter? Some of them, we can understand, amalgamate themselves with the population of great cities, and follow other callings; some, we can readily believe, get boarded and lodged at the public expense in unions, prisons, and even in regiments, whence they emerge with the first burst of vernal weather. At any rate, from the middle of November to the beginning of April they are conspicuous by their absence from the roads, and the curious explorer who would select that period of the year for a study of our English road-professionals might be pardoned for believing that the race became extinct with the old glory of the road itself.

#### ODD STORIES ABOUT RINGS.

THE late Colonel G. Paulett Cameron, C.B., possessed a singularly curious ring, called the "Tiger's Claw," to which was attached an episode of a sanguinary character, related by the historians of India.

About the year 1650, Sevajee founded the Mahratta monarchy, which, subsequently, was destined to become one of the most powerful that arose on the ruins of the Mogul empire. At the period of its first uprising, it was of the highest importance for Sevajee to gain possession of the rich and renowned city of Beeja, which, at that period, was said by Eastern writers to be thirty miles in circumference. Finding he was not strong enough to take it by force, he sought an interview with the Mogul governor, Afzool Khan. It was agreed, to defeat treachery, that each should be attended by only a single follower. At the appointed time Sevajee prepared himself for what he considered a holy work

by the ceremonies of religion, and the solace of maternal approbation. He performed his ablutions with peculiar care, and prostrating himself at his mother's feet, he besought her blessing. Thus morally armed for the conflict, he did not, however, neglect to provide himself with the more substantial requisites of success and safety. To appearance, his covering was only a turban and a cotton gown, but beneath he wore a steel-chain cap, and steel armour. Within his right sleeve he placed a crooked dagger, called in the language of the country a scorpion, and on the fingers of his left-hand, a treacherous weapon called a "tiger's claw," which consists of three crooked blades of small dimensions; the whole being easily concealed in a half-closed hand. Thus accoutred, he advanced to the place of meeting. The Khan had arrived before him, and Sevajee, as he approached, frequently stopped as though under the influence of alarm. To assure him, the armed attendant of the Mahometan general removed a few paces distant from his master, and the latter approaching Sevajee, the conference commenced by the ordinary ceremonial of an embrace. The Mahratta prepared to make the most of his opportunity, and struck the tiger's claw into the body of the Khan, following the blow by another from his dagger. The Khan drew his sword, and made a cut at the assassin, but it fell harmless on the concealed armour. Sevajee's follower rushed to his support, and a preconcerted signal being given, a body of troops attacked those of his adversary, who had been stationed at a little distance, and who, being unprepared for such an attack, found themselves exposed to an enemy before they could stand to their arms. The victory enriched Sevajee with a vast amount of plunder; but this was little compared with the accession of reputation which he owed to it; the perpetration of successful treachery being, in Mahratta estimation, the highest exercise of human genius.

Outwardly the tiger-ring appears like two rings of plain coloured stones on different fingers, but these are connected inwardly by the formidable weapon mentioned.

In a work on Finger-ring Lore published a few years ago, some instances are given of lost rings recovered from fishes. The following might have been added. The facts are related by Sir E. Alexander, in his *Salmon-fishing in Canada*:

"Seven o'clock came, and William Massey, having handed his bride-elect to the table, sat at the head of the hospitable board, around which were assembled twenty people, and proceeded to carve the salmon, which we had so recently killed. On placing the fish-knife near the gills to take off the first-cut of the head, it grated on some unyielding substance, which prevented his making the proper incision in the fish, whereupon he took a fork and drew out from a bed which it had formed for itself, beneath the gills, a solid gold finger-ring, with the word 'pure' stamped on the inside of it. It was handed about as a curiosity, and the whisper at table was that it was one of the rings of the former Mrs. Massey, who, with her footman and two boatmen had been lost in a fog, while crossing the Shannon, near the spot where the salmon in question had been caught, but this her husband denied aloud, and eventually his sister, the Hon. Mrs. Drew, took possession of it."

Mr. John H. Van Lennep, in *Notes and Queries*, relates that some years before the drainage of the Haarlemmermeir, a lake which, for its extension, almost merited the name of a sweet-water sea, Mr. Van Notten, a gentleman living at Amsterdam, happened to be one of a party on a fishing excursion on that lake, then justly renowned for its beautiful perch. By some accident, Mr. Van Notten chanced to drop his ring into the water, and naturally considered it lost for ever. Several years had elapsed, and the drainage of the lake was proceeding fast, when Mr. Van Notten was apprised that a ring had been found in the reclaimed grounds. Though very doubtful as to the possibility of its being his lost property, he thought some enquiry might be made, and before leaving home he provided himself with an impression of his arms in sealing-wax to prove the identity of the seal. Scarcely had he presented this proof to the gentleman in whose keeping the ring was, before he heard the welcome reply, "Sir, I do not want any further proof; there is the ring—it is your own."

The ring of invisibility, such as Gyges is said to have worn, occupied a large share of popular superstition in early times. In a curious and rare work, entitled, *The Majick of Kirani, King of Percia, and of Harpocraton*—printed in the year 1685—is a curious receipt for making this charmed ring. "Dissolve the eyes of a quail, or of the sea-tench, with a little water in a glass



vessel for seven days, then add a little oyle ; put a little of this into the candle, or only anynt a rag, and light among the company, and they will look upon themselves as devils on fire, so that every one will run his way. In the sardonyx stone, engrave a quail, and under its feet a sea-tench, and put a little of the said confection under the stone in the hollow of the ring, and when you are unwilling to be seen, anoint your face all over with the aforesaid confection, and wear the ring, and no man shall see you if you do anything in the house ; no, not if you should take anything away that is in the house."

It is remarkable that the story of Gyges comes up again in the Welsh romance of *Morte d'Arthur*. One is there said to have a ring which possessed the virtue of rendering the wearer invisible, and which, with Guendolen's chess-board, was reckoned among the thirteen wonders of Britain. In the *Mabinogion*, stones conferring invisibility are frequently mentioned, usually in the favourite form of a gem set in a ring. "Take this ring," said the damsel with yellow curling hair, "and put it on thy finger with the stone inside thy hand, and close thy hand upon the stone, and so long as thou concealest it, it will conceal thee."

The stone of invisibility was formerly kept at Caerleon, in Monmouthshire, the city whence St. David journeyed into Pembroke-shire. It is mentioned in the *Triads* thus : "The stone of the King of Luned, which liberated Owen, the son of Urien, from between the portcullis and the wall ; whoever concealed that stone, or bezel, would conceal him." The "Stone of Remembrance," also alluded to in the *Mabinogion*, was a jewel endowed with invaluable properties, which it imparted, not only to its wearer, but to anyone who looked upon it. "Ronabury," says Iddawe to the enchanted dreamer on the yellow calf-skin, "dost thou see the ring, with a stone set in it, that is upon the Emperor's hand ?" "I see it," he answered ; "it is one of the properties of that stone to enable thee to remember that thou seest here to-night, and hadst thou not seen the stone, thou would'st never have been able to remember aught thereof."

Montaigne, in one of his essays, alludes to the Platonic ring, that renders the wearer invisible, turned inward towards the palm of the hand, and adds, "If such were common, a great many would often hide themselves when they ought most to appear."

The ring of invisibility which belonged to Otnet, King of Lombardy, given to him by the Queen-mother when he went to gain in marriage the Soldan's daughter, had, among other virtues, the very useful one of directing the wearer the right road to take in travelling.

The fish and the ring, however, is one of the oldest traditions we have. In the Talmud fables, the prodigy of Solomon's ring is duly related, and ancient writers have enlarged upon the same theme. "Here in Hippo," says Augustine, "there was a poor and holy old man, by name Florentius, who obtained a living by tailoring. This man once lost his coat, and, not being able to purchase another to replace it, he came to the shrine of the Twenty Martyrs in this city, and prayed aloud to them, beseeching that they would enable him to get another garment. A number of silly boys, who overheard him, followed him on his departure, scoffing at him, and asking him whether he had begged fifty pence from the martyrs to buy a coat. The poor man went on silently towards home, and, as he passed near the sea, he saw a large fish which had been cast upon the sand, and was still panting. The other persons who were present allowed him to take up the fish, which he brought to one Catosus, a cook, and a good Christian, who bought it of him for three hundred pence. With this he meant to purchase wool, which his wife might spin, and make into a garment for him. When the cook cut up the fish, he found within its belly a ring of gold, which his conscience persuaded him to give to the poor man from whom he bought the fish. He did so, saying at the same time, "Behold how the Twenty Martyrs have clothed you !"

Many stories have been related of the recognition of persons by a ring. The following instance has been recorded by De Thou and other French historians. In 1562, Rouen was besieged by the Protestants, and the governor of the city, Montgomery, having observed the dauntless bravery of an officer under his command, François de Cville, entrusted him with the defence of a fortified gate. While thus engaged, he was shot through the head by an arquebusier, and rendered insensible. Falling from the rampart, and considered dead, he was thrown into a ditch, and some earth was lightly thrown over him. He lay thus from ten in the morning until six in the evening. His faithful servant,

named Barré, hearing of the sad fate of his master, obtained permission to search for the body, and have it buried. All his care seemed fruitless, for the body was disfigured and covered with mud. He was about to return disconsolate, when he observed, by the light of the moon, something shining brilliantly, and, stooping down, he found it proceeded from a diamond which his master wore in a ring. On touching the finger, he fancied there was some warmth in it, and he conveyed the body tenderly to the garrison, where the body was examined and pronounced lifeless. The servant, however, was not satisfied with this opinion, and remained watching his master, until, after four days of insensibility, Civile regained his senses and was restored to consciousness. This remarkable man, who was born in 1537, and died in 1614, was the hero of numberless adventures and critical escapes. D'Aubigné, the historian, relates: "I saw him at the national assemblies, a deputy from Normandy, forty-two years after his wound, and I observed that when we signed our depositions, he always added: 'François de Civile, three times dead, three times buried, and three times, by God's grace, restored to life.'"

Recognition by means of a ring is pleasingly rendered in a tale of Italian Tirols, one of which is called Zendrara, equivalent to our Cinderella, of which, with a few variations, it is a counterpart. The heroine, in love with a young Count, obtains the place of kitchen-maid in his palace; but goes to a ball richly dressed, where the Count, not knowing her thus changed, falls in love with her. He gives her a ring, which, in her renewed capacity of cook, she sends up in his broth, as Klein-Else, in a nearly similar story in The North Tirolean Folk-lore, does in a pancake. The count recognises the ring and marries her.

In one or two versions of the Roman story, the means of recognition is a ring, instead of a slipper.

A story of a ring being the price of a kiss is related in the Icelandic Kormak's Saga, showing in what light the fair sex was regarded there in ancient times. Allusion is made to a duel in which Thorvard, as the wounded person, is obliged to give his antagonist a gold ring, equivalent to the legal fine of three marks. In another duel with Kormak, in a love-affair, he is again overcome, and is obliged to give another gold ring, and finds that duelling

is not only dangerous, but it is also an expensive amusement. Kormak, before setting sail for Norway, pays a visit to the Lady Keingarda, for whom he had battled, and he gives her two kisses. Thorvard declares that he must pay the legal fine for his audacity.

"What do ye demand?" asks Kormak.

"The two rings," replies Thorvard, "which I had to give thee, by virtue of the Holmgang regulations"—a penalty exacted for this breach of good manners.

"Be it so," said Kormak, giving him the two rings, and extemporising a strophe, which runs somewhat as follows:

For two kisses impress'd,  
With glowing desire  
On a woman's sweet lips,  
Two gold rings ye require.

The gems shall be yours,  
Though methinks 'tis not meet  
To tax a poor wight  
For so luscious a treat.

Mr. Shaw, in his Visits to High Tartary, Yarkand, and Kashgar, gives an instance of the efficacy of a seal-ring in reducing an elephant to obedience. "The King of Bokhâra marched to Khokand and established his protégé, Koodah Yâr. The Khokandees were much struck by two elephants which he brought with him. These are the envy of all other Central Asian potentates. It was gravely related to me that one of these elephants having got loose, set off on the road to Bokhâra. Attempts were made, but vainly, to stop him. The servants reported the matter to their master. The Ameer took off his signet-ring, the symbol of his authority, and dispatched it by the hands of a courier on horseback, saying, 'When you have overtaken the elephant, put it before him, and in my name, and tell him to return to Khokand.' The man did so, whereupon the elephant paused, turned round, and slowly returned to the city."

The salutary virtues of a ring, independent of the enchantments and occult powers grafted on it in olden times, are strikingly exemplified in the following anecdote. In the Histoires et Paraboles of Father Bonaventure Girandean (edit. 1813), is the story of a rich man, whose remorse for an ill-spent life led him to Rome to beseech the Pope to convert him. The Pope suggested various penances that he should undergo, but none seemed to meet his case; fasting was detrimental to his health; he had no time to read or pray; to undertake a pilgrimage would interrupt his worldly affairs—in fact, to every recom-

mentation of the Pope he had some excuse for not carrying it out. The Pope heard the penitent patiently, and, on his leaving, gave him a gold ring, on which was the inscription, "Memento mori" (Remember you must die), and told him that he should always wear the ring, and read the inscription at least once a day.

The rich man retired, congratulating himself on having so light a task imposed upon him, but, in a short time, the words fell deeper and deeper on his mind, and he said to himself: "As I must die, what else have I in the world to prepare myself for it? Why regard my health that death must destroy, or think of riches that will pass away?" The conclusion of these thoughts led to his pursuing a life of rigorous self-denial, and doing worthy actions, which made him beloved by all to his dying day.

In one of Hawthorne's American notes, he relates a singular incident that befell his friend, Dr. Harris, while a junior at college. Being in want of money to purchase shirts, and other necessities, and not knowing how to obtain it, he set out on a walk from Cambridge to Boston. On the way he cut a stick, and after walking a short distance perceived that something had become attached to the end of it. This proved to be a gold ring, bearing the motto, "God speed thee, friend!" an encouragement to persevere in his efforts for improvement, and a salutary assistance to him.

Rings, as we know, in former times, were sometimes officially used in the conveyance of property, and were legally recognised as part and parcel of such transfers. In the eighteenth year of Queen Elizabeth's reign, Sir Francis Englefield settled his manor and estate at Englefield, in Berkshire, on Francis, his nephew, with power, notwithstanding, of revoking his grant "if he, during his natural life, should deliver or tender to his nephew a gold ring." "With intent," says Burke, "to make void the uses of his said settlement; various disputes and points of law arose (the manors, lands, and vast possessions having been forfeited to the Queen in the twenty-eighth year of her reign) whether the said manor and estate of Englefield were forfeited to the Queen." In order to settle the dispute off-hand, Elizabeth, in the ensuing session, had a special Act passed, establishing the forfeiture of Englefield to herself, her heirs and assigns, and, backed by the

enactment, she came upon the scene, tendered a gold ring to Sir Francis, and seized and confiscated the said manor and estate, and many other possessions.

By the ingenious, if not cunning, device by which Queen Elizabeth confiscated the estates of the Englefields, this ancient family was stripped of an inheritance on which they had flourished for seven hundred and eighty years.

The Queen's love for jewellery was unbounded, and her wily courtiers availed themselves of this passion by giving her numerous jewels as New Year presents; but among the costly rings in which she took especial delight, none could bring her such good fortune (however equivocally employed) as the gold ring that turned the fortunes of the Englefields.

## LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNN," ETC., ETC.

### CHAPTER XXXV.

THE preservation of Uncle Hugh's serenity of temper was a task Ellinor detested, and yet one which from time to time she found herself compelled to take in hand. If only she could have kept a third maid to perform the tiresome office she would have been quite willing to have assigned to her one of the slippers she herself was waiting to step into—in other words, have shared with her the handsome fortune she was expecting to accrue to her when Uncle Hugh died. Fatigue of heart she shunned as much as she did fatigue of body. The economy of the emotions was an art in which she was an adept.

"Why should I," she had exclaimed to Lucy as she detailed to her another gusty interview with the old gentleman, "be compelled to smile and say pleasant things, when I have no wish to say anything at all?"

And Lucy's answer, an answer now that was beginning to be a sort of refrain to the duets these two sang together, had been:

"Oh, my darling, I wish I could do this for you—give your smiles as well as your tears when they are a task to you."

Uncle Hugh was, for him, in a singularly tempestuous frame of mind just then. Like his beautiful niece, he did not care to spend his soul over the small worries and anxieties of existence. To his way of thinking a gentleman should have the affairs of life made smooth and ready to his hand just

as he had his dogs trained and his guns loaded for him. He was willing enough that this, his favourite niece, should have her whims and wishes humoured to their fullest extent, always provided they were whims and wishes that did not run counter to his own, and for which he could experience a fair amount of sympathy. But somehow of late these two conditions did not appear to be fulfilled, a catastrophe, no doubt, for which Providence in part was to blame, in part Ellinor herself. Providence, for example, must be held responsible for Juliet's ill-health, the breaking-up of Mrs. Yorke's London home, and for the consequent unpleasant necessity of providing suitable quarters for Ellinor during the winter season; but Providence could in no sense be held to blame for the young lady's discontent with her suitable quarters when they had been found for her, nor for the whimsicalness of her conduct in taking flight from them, and establishing herself, as she had, in quarters that were not so suitable, and with which unsuitability she, moreover, appeared entirely content.

"What you can find to do here morning, noon, and night, with Sir Peter and his wife always upstairs in armchairs, or driving about the town looking after new doctors, is more than I can imagine," he said, walking up and down the room with his thumbs in his waistcoat, and having visions meanwhile of a number of young men making themselves free of the house, and there being "the mischief to pay" afterwards.

"We eat, we drink, we sleep, we go out driving, occasionally we walk. I suppose we should do all these things whether Sir Peter and Lady Moulsey were upstairs or down," answered Ellinor composedly.

By a coincidence this interview with Uncle Hugh took place on the self-same morning that Phil had a few questions put to him by Colonel Wickham.

"Do you get any visitors? That's what I want to know," asked Uncle Hugh, stopping in front of her chair, and looking full at her. "Any confounded young fools who don't know how to get rid of their time, and so come in here to make asses of themselves?"

Uncle Hugh had a large head—a distinctly pleasure-loving, money-spending head—but in stature he was somewhat dumpy. Nevertheless, as he said this, his neck elongated and his figure seemed to extend itself till one would have credited

him with at least five feet ten inches of bone and muscle.

"Several of my mother's old friends have been to see me—a Bishop of somewhere or other and his wife; a Sir Joseph Someone—I've forgotten his name—and his wife. I think he has something to do with the Post Office, or the Bank of England, or the British Museum—I'm not sure which. I don't know whether they belong to the class you name."

Uncle Hugh turned on his heel, and began walking up and down the room again.

Ellinor's coolness and self-possession under the fire of his crisp, blustering interrogatories always smoothed down his ill-humour. If she had snapped at him, or grown nervous and ill at ease under his cross-questioning, the chances were he would have cut her off with a shilling.

He came back from the other end of the long room with a calmer question:

"Now, Nell, you know perfectly well what I mean. Are there any of those lank-haired young idiots who call themselves poets, or any of those infernal painters, dangling about the house? You know there were whispers about you and young Thorne—that fool who didn't know how to handle a pistol—a little while ago. Of course there was not a word of truth in the reports—I know that—and no one with any sense in his head believed them; but still I do not choose that such whispers should be set going—do you hear? I won't have you talked about in that way!"

Ellinor winced a little, but did not show it.

"Mr. Effingham has been here exactly three times to paint me as Gyneth, but I wrote to him last night, and told him he must not come again, as you did not approve of my giving sittings to such youthful members of his profession," she answered quietly.

"You did!"

"Yes; I told him you had a strong antipathy to all painters, especially young ones, and begged him to keep clear of the house for the future."

Uncle Hugh smiled a grim smile.

"That's about the most sensible thing you've ever done in your life, Nell; you've saved me the trouble of speaking my mind to him," he said approvingly. "Now what I want to know is when you're going to join your mother. I'm convinced that's the best thing you can do now. Sir Peter

and his wife will light among their many doctors on a man who'll suddenly start them off for one of the Hesses or the 'Bads—confounded humbugs the whole lot are!—and I shall have you thrown on my hands again!"

He broke off for a moment, then added with an energy that left no room for doubt as to the sincerity of the wish:

"I wish to Heaven, Ellinor, you would make haste and bring off that fine match you're always talking about!"

"My dear uncle, if ever I'm to make a fine match I must have someone to do the active and aggressive part of the arrangement for me. You don't expect me to go out of my way to lay traps and snares for men. It wouldn't suit me!"

Uncle Hugh chuckled:

"It seems to me, without going very much out of your way, you contrive to do a fair amount of execution. But who, may I ask, young lady, do you expect to do the active and aggressive part for you? Not me, I hope, at my time of life."

Ellinor's reply was the languidly-put question:

"Have you seen Lord Winterdowne lately? Will he be in town before Easter, do you think?"

Uncle Hugh gave a long, low whistle.

"Oh, that's it, is it? The wind sits in that quarter. My dear niece, I have seen Lord Winterdowne no later than yesterday, when he was in town, presiding at a meeting of 'ologists of some sort, and there is not the least possibility of his being in town this side of Easter. So, while you are waiting for that desirable event, the best thing you can do is to pack up your boxes and set off for the Riviera, in company with that little girl you've taken such a violent fancy for."

He was a dogged old man this Uncle Hugh, and went back terrier-like to his fads, like a dog to his bone.

Ellinor felt she must get this bone from between his teeth, though her fingers got bitten in the process.

"I'm not fit for a long journey just now," she said, with ever such a slight frown; "my cold has pulled me down a good deal, and the sight of Juliet and her many ailments would be sure to bring me still lower."

"Why, in Heaven's name, don't you go to a doctor, if you feel as bad as all that?" ejaculated the old gentleman irritably, yet with some real feeling below the irritability, for he could not forget how that his

mother and two brothers had died of that self-same disease which had now Ellinor's sister in its fell grasp.

"Oh, I'm going, Uncle Hugh—I'm always going; but you know how I hate doctors—how the very sight of them sets me shivering and thinking of churchyards and all that——"

But Uncle Hugh interrupted her.

"Look here, Nell! it's just this: if you don't find a doctor for yourself, I shall do it for you, and see if there really is anything ailing you, or if it's only one of your fancies. Why, medical registers must abound in this house. I should say the whole literature of the family consisted in them——"

"And in spectacle-makers' and aurists' catalogues," finished Ellinor. "Very well, Uncle Hugh, since you so particularly wish it, I'll find my way into a medical consulting-room one day next week, and let you know the result." And as she said this, the thought in her own mind was: "And he'll be the oddest doctor I shall ever have come across, if he doesn't lay it down as a necessity for my continued existence that I must remain in London right on till the end of the season."

Uncle Hugh went away mollified, leaving behind him his signature to a considerable amount.

Ellinor tossed the cheque over to Gretchen, and then fell to considering her plans—her ways and means for procuring success to her wishes.

It was all nonsense what Uncle Hugh had said about Lord Winterdowne, it had been said simply to throw her off the track, she said to herself; to her certain knowledge he would be in London presiding at scientific meetings (there were the advertisements in the papers), three times within the next ten days. Well, each of those three times Uncle Hugh must secure him either for luncheon before the meetings or for dinner afterwards, and for the play after that.

All that could be easily arranged, provided Uncle Hugh could be kept in a good humour.

To keep Uncle Hugh in a good humour it would be necessary for her to see a doctor.

Very well, then, the doctor could be made most useful by ordering her to remain in London under his care.

That could be easily arranged also.

And since this business of seeing a doctor had to be gone through, it might as

well be gone through as speedily as possible—say to-morrow instead of next week or in ten days' time.

After all, matters were arranging themselves much more satisfactorily than they had seemed inclined to a little while ago. She had distanced Edie so easily with Phil, that she had possibly somewhat underrated a victory she had won without scratch or scar. Evidently Edie, though she could win her lovers, did not know how to keep them. As it had been with Phil, so should it be with Lord Winterdowne, or any other well-looking, tolerably distinguished individual to whose heart she, Ellinor Yorke, might choose to lay siege.

And as Ellinor sat thus, a mimic Alexander counting her worlds conquered and those which yet remained to overthrow, Lucy, coming into the room equipped for the morning's drive, paid her as sweet a compliment as any the beauty had ever had offered at her shrine.

"You have the loveliest colour in the world, dear, this morning," she said as she buttoned her black kid glove, "and your eyes are oh, so bright. You look as if somehow you had come into this world by mistake—I mean as though by right you belonged to another world where sorrow and pain, ugliness and death, were words without meaning."

Ellinor accorded her a gracious smile as she went out of the room to put on her own cloak and bonnet.

"You never were nearer the truth in your life, Lucy," she said in her low clear voice. "For me at this moment sorrow and pain, ugliness and death, are words without meaning."

#### CHAPTER XXXVL

"SING before breakfast, cry before night," says the homely old proverb, and like most homely old proverbs, it is but a voice to thoughts which lie uppermost in many hearts. Some people put it another way—"If you get to the top of a hill, you must come down," they say; "Laughing and crying are near neighbours," and so forth.

Here is another example of the truth of these old homely adages. On the day after Colonel Wickham had held his reckoning with Phil, Lucy and Ellinor went driving forth in the keen, frosty air, with bright eyes, rosy cheeks, and light hearts. Lucy was beginning to feel that though life for her must of necessity be painted in sober colours, yet sober

colours were by no means sombre colours, and were by many shades removed from gloomy black. She was beginning somewhat to overcome her first terrible sense of bereavement, and, thanks to Mrs. Thorne's liberality, she had now a fair fortune at command. A fair fortune necessarily was a thing that opened the door to a good many pleasant probabilities and possibilities, and though she would gladly enough have surrendered it all for half-a-dozen kindly, heartfelt words from Rodney's mother, yet, nevertheless, it was not a thing to be despised. Besides, she had not yet given up all hopes of those half-dozen kindly words being spoken sooner or later. Some day she and Mrs. Thorne would be sure to meet, and if once they could see each other face to face, and talk about Rodney, things must come right between them, not a doubt. Meantime she had the dearest, best, most beautiful woman in the world for friend and benefactress; and she, too, was walking, so it seemed to her, day by day nearer and nearer to the goal on which her heart was set. What more in life could anyone expect than what she, Lucy Selwyn, had and hoped for?

These were some of the sources of Lucy's bright eyes and rosy cheeks. Ellinor's spring of joy did not lie quite so deep, and ran in a narrower channel. Self was its Alpha and Omega. "My beauty, my health, my wealth, my talent, my head-and-shoulder's-height above the common herd," its source; "My success, my triumphs, my happiness," the great ocean to which it tended.

"Ah," cried Lucy, startled for once into poetry by the glimpse of the park—trees, grass, pebbly paths, one mass of frost-jewels, "this is star-land itself. I hope heaven will be something like it!"

Ellinor nodded in the direction of big, bustling Piccadilly, towards which they were driving. "I hope heaven will be something like that," she said; "but there, I would rather not talk of heaven to-day; earth has far more attractions for me."

This was how they drove to the house of the esteemed medical practitioner, who was expected to endorse with professional authority every one of Ellinor's desires.

And this is how they returned. Two wan, sorrowful young women, one with tears running down her cheeks, the other as though she had suddenly been transformed into a marble likeness of herself; leaning back in their carriage, saying never

a word, shunning even a look one from the other's eyes.

All, forsooth, because the doctor, as he had applied the stethoscope to Ellinor's chest, had said briefly :

"There's mischief here. Get away to the south as fast as you can."

Ellinor knew what the words meant well enough. She had heard them said over Juliet exactly a year ago, and her mother had wrung her hands, gone down on her knees in prayer, and had then risen up, broken up her home, and started for Italy.

"Mischief here!" That meant the slow but sure creepings on of disease, the gradually increasing weakness, the terrible cough, the pantings for breath, the hunting about for warm, sheltered quarters, the fleeing before the breath of north or east wind, the eschewing of all pleasant places of resort, such as ball, theatre, reception-room, the huddling oneself up in wraps and respirators, the mere thought of which would drive a fairly healthy person frantic.

It meant the creeping out of the race of life, the standing on one side to let the rush and crush of the sound and vigorous ones sweep past. It meant the bowing of the head, the turning of the face to the wall, and then the long, long sleep.

Ellinor clasped her hands over her forehead, and leaned back on her cushions, while something between a moan and a groan escaped her lips.

"Oh, my darling!" began Lucy, turning towards her with clasped hands and streaming eyes.

"Be silent!" interrupted Ellinor imperiously. "Let me alone to think my own thoughts;" and then she went on, silently cataloguing, not those things which she might keep and hold for her own, but those things which she had best give up of her own free will, before Death, with its rude auctioneer's hammer, transferred them to another lot, and knocked them down to a more fortunate bidder.

Winterdowns Castle, the coronet, the town house, the horses, the diamonds—these must be given up. They were the things that those who had years of life before them might try for and get; not those whose time was cut down to a few handfuls of months held in a loose, begrudging clasp.

And all hopes of triumphs over belles and beauties of future seasons must go too; all thoughts of winning lovers away from the sides of other girls, let them even be so provincial and insignificant as little Edie Fairfax.

What about Phil Wickham?

Breaking right over the heads of her other thoughts came the question, sharply, imperatively, as one not to be put on one side without succinct answer.

It seemed to be repeated in even more distinct form as the carriage stopped at their own door, and the servant informed Ellinor that Mr. Wickham was upstairs in the drawing-room waiting to see her.

"Will you see him?" asked Lucy, putting out a shaking hand from among her furs, and laying it on Ellinor's arm. And her eyes said: "After this—after this, can you bear to see anyone? Will you not go into some quiet corner and rest your heart?"

Ellinor shook off Lucy's hand.

"I will see him, and alone—see that we are not disturbed, Lucy," she answered almost defiantly. By-and-by, the conventionalities of her world would be defied and trampled underfoot by those uncouth, unmannerly churls, Disease and Death, who will bow to no written nor traditional laws of precedents and social etiquette. Why not take a leaf out of their book and be beforehand with them, as though she, too, were a monarch, and made and snapped conventionalities at will?

As she entered the long, dreary, swathed-up drawing-room, Phil, seated in a far corner, thought that surely never before had living woman owned to so royal, so imperial a gait. A Cleopatra, a Vashti, a Juno even, might have looked shambling and ordinary by her side.

The blinds were drawn down. The room had an unaired, seldom-opened odour hanging about it. Ellinor's long seal mantle seemed to bring into it the fresh, frosty air of the morning.

Phil advanced to meet her.

"I have come to say good-bye!" he said. "I'm off to Paris, Brussels, Geneva, or somewhere or other, by to-night's mail-train."

There was nothing royal or imperial about his gait. By her side he showed as downcast, as pale-faced, as graceless as it is possible for a well-knit, healthy young fellow of six-and-twenty to show.

Ellinor stood in front of him, looking straight at him with those beautiful, changeful, russet-brown eyes of hers. Twice her lips parted as though she would speak but could not. A whole troop of tumultuous thoughts, hopes, longings, despairs, seemed to go sweeping across her face like clouds across a noonday sky.

At last words came to her.

"It is I, not you, who should say good-bye," she said wildly, impetuously, and then she sank on a near sofa, covering her face with both hands.

Phil was startled, troubled.

"What is it? What has happened? Tell me," he asked anxiously.

Ellinor drew her hands from her face. It was blanched, bloodless, no cherry-red on lips, nor glowing carnations on cheek now.

"Only this has happened," she said in a low, strained voice. "Sentence of death has been passed upon me. Nothing more."

"Sentence of death—on you! Great Heavens, I do not understand!" stammered Phil.

"It is hard to understand, hard to believe, isn't it, that this I, sitting here talking to you, warm, breathing, living, will soon be put away out of sight, given up to the coffin, and the clay, and the worms?"

And Ellinor laughed a long, low laugh, all the time without a gleam of colour in lip or cheek, or the light of mirth in her eye.

"Good Heavens, I do not believe it!" cried Phil vehemently.

That grand woman seated there in her furs, young, supremely beautiful, with warm, quick blood coursing through her veins, to be confined and hidden away! Better doubt his own senses, his power of hearing and reasoning at once.

"I do not believe it—I will not believe it!" he cried again. "It is all some frightful mistake! It is not—cannot be true!"

"If you like to go to one of those admirable physicians whose name was in the list you gave me the other day, he will tell you that it can be and is true. Shall I give you his name and address?"

Phil drew a long breath.

"If the whole College of Physicians were to swear to it, yet I would not believe it," he said. "But at present, so far as I can see, it is only the opinion of one man that has been asked and had. Miss Yorke, you must not believe that this man's opinion is final. There are at least fifty or sixty as good as he. You must go to others, and hear what they have to say."

"Thank you. I have no wish to prolong the hideous prelude to the coffin and the worms." She paused a moment, then added in the same unnaturally calm voice: "Come, let us talk of something else. You are going away—when?—where to? Did you tell me just now? I have forgotten."

Fancy a condemned criminal turning round upon the scaffold and addressing a

party of tourists with "Have you your fishing-rods, gentlemen? I hope you will get good sport."

Phil seated himself on the sofa beside her.

"I cannot talk of myself," he said; "I feel bewildered—as though I were in the midst of a hideous nightmare."

"Ah, you will soon get used to the thought, face it, and then forget all about it. Yes, forget—forget——" She broke off, and then added in a more real, more natural tone than she had yet used: "Yes, that is the hardest, bitterest part of all, the being forgotten. I could stand being hated, abhorred, shunned, but the being forgotten is awful. For people to forget even what your face is like, how you looked when you were happy, how you looked when you were sad, how your voice sounded——"

Again she broke off. It seemed as though by thus cataloguing one by one the terrors of the grave she was trying to bring herself to face them and to look away their hideousness.

Phil felt choking.

"There are some voices, some faces, that can never be forgotten by those who have once heard or seen them." And, as he said this, it seemed to him that that white, beautiful face he was gazing at now so earnestly, so pityingly, must haunt him for evermore, sleeping, waking, no matter in what corner of the world he might hide, nor into what mad whirls of business or pleasure he might throw himself.

Ellinor did not seem to hear his interruption. She had pulled off her gloves, and went on talking, half to herself, half to him, as she looked down on and caressed her long, white, shapely hands.

"I've always taken such care of them—and now I must give them up to the clay and the worms. Poor hands! Fancy you after——"

Phil jumped to his feet.

"For Heaven's sake, stop!" he cried.

"I cannot bear it! You'll drive me mad if you talk in this way."

She caught at his last word.

"Mad!" she said; "mad! If madness and death came hand-in-hand, half of the horrors of death would be gone. But they don't, do they, as a rule? No. We go down into the vaults open-eyed, open-eared; we know all about it; we've seen others go there before us; we know what becomes of them—— But I forgot, you don't like to hear about these things. Why should you? They are a long way off from you."



Come, let us talk of something else. Sit down, and tell me where you are going first."

Phil, with something of a groan, sank down on the sofa again. But speech refused to come to his lips. Ellinor went on:

"I am glad you are going away. Shall I tell you why I am glad? I may as well speak the truth to you now. I am glad, because it puts us both, you and I, on one footing. We stand on one platform now."

Phil, in his amazement, turned half round on the sofa and faced her.

"I do not understand—I do not know what you mean," he stammered.

Ellinor removed her seal hat, and pushed her thick, low-growing hair from her brows. Colour had come back to her face. Her voice was calm and natural.

"I will explain," she said composedly. "What I meant to say was, we are on a level now, you and I; you are no longer in a pulpit high over my head preaching to me a miserable sinner at your feet. No; you have come down from your pulpit into the dust, and have done just exactly what the miserable sinner did."

There came a hot guilty rush of blood to Phil's face, but he stammered again:

"I do not see—I do not understand."

"What, I have not yet made my meaning plain! Perhaps your memory may help you to understand. You cannot yet have forgotten our meeting in the shrubbery at Stanham, and our talk about Rodney Thorne? How eloquently you preached to me on my lack of heart, told me how I had led your friend on to love me without a spark of love for him in my heart; how——"

But here Phil jumped to his feet with a bitter cry:

"Stop—in Heaven's name, stop! You don't know what you are saying," he said in a choking voice. "You do not—cannot mean to say that as you trifled with Rodney so I have trifled with you."

White, forlorn, half distraught, yet withal sharply conscience-smitten, he stood in front of her, looking down at her calm, all but smiling face.

"I do mean to say it," she answered, serenely returning his gaze. "As I spent long mornings with Rodney, giving him pleasant words, pleasant looks which meant nothing; so have you spent long mornings with me, playing with me, giving me sweet, pleasant words and looks, and all the while not one grain of love in your

heart for me. If it were not so, how could you go away and leave me now in my sore extremity?"

The last words were said plaintively, piteously.

"May Heaven forgive me!" groaned Phil, clenching his fingers into the palms of his hands till, white and bloodless, naught but sinews and outstanding veins seemed to show in them. "I was mad, I think. I knew not what I was doing. I came because my heart was broken—my brains were going."

Then in his agony he knelt on the ground at her feet, hiding his face in the hem of her dress, and crying aloud:

"Oh, Ellinor, have mercy upon me, pity me if it be possible! I do not—dare not ask you to forgive me."

"I forgive you," she said sweetly; "I will admit the plea you would not admit for me, poor sinner! I will say, how could he help it being what he was?"

Phil lifted up a white, wondering face to the calm, beautiful one that bent over him.

"Being what he was," she went on in the same sweet, low tone as before, "so handsome, so noble, so true, what wonder if she loved him, and broke her heart over him?"

Phil groaned again, and kneeling still, covered his face with both hands.

Ellinor's next words came in a whisper:

"I would not dare speak to you thus had I years of life before me, but with my death-sentence still in my ears, what can it matter what I say?" Her voice ended brokenly.

Phil drew his hands slowly from his face. Their eyes were close together now; his filled with a wild, dumb look of pain, hers with the dancing light of love.

Then all on a sudden there seemed to come a mist and darkness before Phil's eyes, a rush of blood to his brain, a sound as of ten thousand loud voices in his ear. Did her lips first touch his, or his hers? He could not say—he did not know; he only knew they met in one long, lingering, passionate kiss, and that there, as he knelt at her feet, she fell upon his neck crying, "Oh, my love, my love! I find you, I lose you, in one breath!"

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SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 1885.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## "THE FLOWER OF DOOM;"

OR, THE CONSPIRATOR.

A SHORT SERIAL STORY.

By MISS BETHAM-EDWARDS,

Author of "Kitty," "Love and Mirage," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER VII. APPEAL AND COUNTER APPEAL.

THAT word brought home to her mind with fresh and still more painful force the barrier separating her from her former lover. She crimsoned, indignant light flashed in her eyes, passionate words were on the point of rising to her lips; but the impulse was checked. By what right should she remonstrate with him on the part he was playing, object to the line of conduct he had laid down, oppose his convictions? With visible effort she controlled herself.

"Concerning the future, also, we shall have abundant opportunity for discourse; for you will be generous. You will repay injury by benefit," he urged, still wearing that ingratiating—perhaps, under other circumstances, irresistible smile. The smile, coupled as it was with such careless, almost self-complacent words, stung Bernarda, and forced from her reluctant lips the question she had been burning to ask.

"Be open," she said; "why do you come to-day to ask me to be your wife? There is a hidden motive"—she did not dare to add, "since your affection for me is dead." He looked hardly taken aback by the question; only, as if it were put too soon.

"You are right. There are other motives besides the desire to repair an injury." Then he added as he scanned her narrowly: "I hardly think you are in a frame of mind to do justice to them as yet; you must give me leave to come often; we will

discuss the matters which of course lie nearest your heart as they do to mine, in spite of that aghast look at the word I used just now. Why that look? Is not my country yours?"

Bernarda listened with lips unsealed.

"Is not my cause your own also?" he broke in, rising from his chair, as if on the point of lashing himself into a fury of expostulation. Suddenly recalled to his position, he reseated himself, and resumed his former manner. "No word more from me on that subject unless I obtain the promise of which I came in quest, and then we must arrange our interviews with due circumspection, with absolute security from eavesdroppers. You understand?"

Bernarda held up her finger, and a girl's sweet voice sounded from below.

"My little maid belongs to an amateur choir, and she always sings thus whilst sewing. Yet one precaution more for your satisfaction."

For her own also! She had something secret, urgent to say to this man, whose influence was already reasserting itself over her. And although, perhaps, in her inmost heart she felt that her fate was already sealed, yet it seemed impossible to her to become the wife of one who loved her not—who was a conspirator! Thus she swayed between two volitions, two assurances. All her future belonged to him. If she did not speak out now her one opportunity might be lost. She rang the bell then, and her visitor heard her say to the singing-girl:

"Marion, please go at once and match those silks I spoke to you about this morning. Meantime, should anyone call, I will answer the door."

Two minutes later the gate clanged, a light step passed down the street. Bernarda

re-entered the little parlour, and closed the door with beating heart. They were alone.

"Edgeworth," she began, her voice now as full of feeling and emotion as before it had been impersonal and even, "I had also a word to say to you. Many and many a time I have half resolved to seek you out. Your ways are dark, but not unknown of men. I may, then, judge of them as any other. Could I marry you with this abhorrence of your conduct in my soul, this condemnation of a part on which you pride yourself? Oh, will nothing bend your awful purpose—nothing turn you from ways of blood and crime? Listen. We were young together. You loved me once. You are bound to hear me."

She was sitting beside him, her clasped hands resting on his passive arm, her face raised to his.

"For think of your conspicuousness, the prestige of your name, the influence of your fortune! A common man could not do so much harm. You are the evil inspiration of thousands!"

He smiled down upon her now, not sadly, not contemptuously, but with an unmistakable imperturbability, almost indifference. She hardly felt sure that he was listening to her till he spoke.

"Say anything that you have to say. You are a grand woman," he said.

"But my words have no power to move you. You are stone-deaf, blind, insensible here. Yet you were humane once," she went on; "you could not bear to see any living creature suffer; and now"—she rose, and leaning on the mantelpiece, added with hardly restrained tears, and passionate, interjectional utterances—"you must see that in a righteous cause you are sinning against righteousness! Is there not misery enough in the world that you must heap up the sum? And in these black plots and fiendish intrigues, it is ever the innocent who suffer for the guilty. You strike in the dark, and hit, perhaps, their blind ministers—our foes, never. For," she cried, unable any longer to restrain herself, sinking to a low stool at his feet, and clasping his knees, "I cannot pollute my soul in a sacred cause, but I love my country, Edgeworth, as well as you. My country—my poor country!"

That self-constrained, quietly determined mood of his was not in the least touched by anything she could say. So much was evident to herself, but his eye rested

admiringly on the beautiful head now bowed low in anguish. She had surprised and impressed him. He was, perhaps, wondering to find that years had heightened instead of detracting from her beauty.

"You will marry me?" he now said in a low voice.

"For my country's sake!" she exclaimed bitterly, and rising, no longer a suppliant, but proud and defiant, met his look. "You would use me for your crooked purposes? Bend me also to work evil that good may come? These are the hidden motives you hinted at just now."

"There shall be no secrets between us by-and-by," he said, rising also and standing beside her. "You will learn to see things in a very different light when we have had more time together; at least I am sure of one thing—we respect each other's opinions. We will each listen in turn, willing to be convinced."

Again an irony that stung and galled. But Bernarda would not show any resentment of the speech. Whilst realising, moreover, the implacable nature of his resolve and the cruel sarcasm implied in his words, a new light was breaking on her mind. As his wife she might influence him in spite of himself. This marriage, impossible as it seemed, might wear the aspect of a duty.

"I cannot begin my vindication now. It would take too long. Give me leave to come on Sunday afternoon," he said pleasantly in the friendliest voice; "you are probably at leisure then, as well as I."

She stood irresolute.

"You will, at least, grant me one interview more. I shall come next Sunday, then, to have my answer. Meantime, I take this token."

He bent forward, and very deftly, without a trace of sentimentality, removed the pansy she wore, in order to place it in his button-hole. The task occupied him several seconds, during which his face all but touched her own; but he seemed wholly unconscious of the contact—only gratified to have his way.

"You shall have a rose, when I come next time, in exchange for your heartsease. And what a heartsease!" he exclaimed, as he held up the blossom and looked at it admiringly. "Where do you get these floral paragon, Erna?"

The symbolic flower in his hand, the name none else had called her by on his lips! Bernarda felt on the point of burst-

ing into tears, like any lovesick school-girl. His coolness helped her to restrain herself.

"My business is with flowers," she said, watching him as he readjusted the pansy, wondering if he understood why she should ever wear one above her heart. "I am a worker of flowers in silk. Did you not know it?"

"Yes, indeed," and his face for the first time showed real feeling. "My poor girl, life has indeed been hard to you, and all through fault of mine. But time presses to-day." Here he glanced at his watch, and took up hat and stick. "Adieu till the day after to-morrow. No hurry then, remember. Keep out intruders; let us have plenty of time for quiet talk."

Then he made haste to go, leaving Bernarda to those sunny, deceptive paths, those dark tracks of remembered sorrow, in which she moved alone. For the isolating brightness and gloom of a few hours before—did they not symbolise her life, alike as much of it as was past, and whatever portion remained in store?

Alone! Could any spell now break the solitude wrapping her round like a garment?

He had sought her out at last, and for the purpose of asking her to become his wife, without affection in his heart, without as much as a memory of what that affection had been. She recalled every look, word, and act of their unexpected interview—to her so fraught with passionate memories, to him so transparently unemotional—and could not discover any trace of the old love in the least little particular. He had certainly shown concern when reminded of the necessity she was under of earning her bread; but it was of the purely benevolent kind. The pinched look of a beggar-woman might have evoked the same expression of sympathy. And he had carried off her flower—a transaction that should have been lover-like. Had he asked her for a lucifer-match in order to light his cigar, he could not have put less sentiment into the act.

Then she reviewed his looks, one by one—the expression with which he had first greeted her, the smile accompanying this speech or that, the lingering farewell glance. No indication of deep, hidden feeling here—only the measured, dispassionate interest of an old acquaintance. And those cold, careless, peace-making kisses! He, her recalcitrant lover, in the eyes of the world her faithless bridegroom,

coming, as he did, on an errand of atonement and reconciliation, might well be excused for proffering the kiss of peace. But could there be such a pact between them without love? Was he cold to her, simply because his heart was now shut to human affection; or had the pardoned lapse, the forfeited word, the broken troth, been followed by another kind of disloyalty harder still to forgive?

She sat lost in reverie till her little damsel's ring at the front door recalled the world of actualities. Only two days before she should see him again, before her yea or nay must be accorded. Heaven be praised! they were common days, dedicated to congenial toil, and the daily task that seemed in itself a benediction.

#### CHAPTER IV. THE SUNDAY WITHOUT FLOWERS.

BERNARDA'S Sabbaths were flower-festivals all the year round, given up after prayers in church to the artless worship of flowers.

As soon as the bright days began, she would send her singing-girl home, put the house-key into her pocket, and betaking herself by rail or boat into the country, remain abroad till nightfall.

Rich-hued flowers of stately shape pleased her fancy best—the daffodil of river-holms; the marsh-marigold bordering dusky pool, circlet of bright gold set about a black pearl; the wild rhododendron, crimson flakes of bygone sunsets lingering in the copse. She could do anything she would with such flowers as these, or with the ox-eyed daisy and the foxglove, rivals of the summer, twin glories of meadow and hedgerow.

Her favourites among flowers were ever those that asserted themselves, held their court in the floral world; and although not a petal but was dear to her, the meek, creeping, pathetic things that seem ever on the look-out for sympathy and caresses delighted her least. The petunia was one of her darlings—that superb blotch of colour, for it is nothing more—so fragile, evanescent, and airy, that even as we gaze, we expect it to take wing like a butterfly. Of the pomegranate-flower also she never tired. She often found herself longing to take part in grand ceremonials on purpose to wear in her dark hair these florets cut out of solid coral. But no more festivals were in store for her. The flowers were hers to work for, to rejoice in, to wear for a lost love's sake. That was all.

Much as she delighted in the country, therefore, her love of flowers was best satisfied in winter-gardens, those collections of tropical plants under glass, maintained at such lavish expense, and with such learned care, which can in a moment transport us to another clime. She was on the friendliest terms with the great gardeners round about London, and to their conservatories she paid long visits, inspecting fresh arrivals, choosing new models, carrying away a pansy for her breast-knot. And sometimes—for she had awakened sympathies among her young embroiderers, if she had avoided friendships—there would be a bridal-bouquet to select, or perchance a funeral-wreath. One girl was about to become a wife; another was made an orphan.

She encouraged her apprentices to talk to her about their homes, joys, and sorrows, even love-affairs, and any unusual event was celebrated with flowers. She never gave anything else by way of a friendly token, hoping and believing that such little things affect even the most careless, and that one and all of her girls would be better in after-life for this flower apprenticeship.

It suddenly and painfully dawned upon her mind, when the next Sunday came round, that it was to be a day without flowers. She shuddered as she glanced fearfully towards the hidden future, wondering what lay concealed behind that darkness—what lay behind for her and for him?

As the meeting drew near, she went through a phase of feeling which many of us must have experienced, and none, surely, are able to forget.

We have had a dim conception all our lives of the abysses of crime, and anguish, and unfathomable depths of sin and misery that lie outside ordinary existence, and are happily escaped by the vast proportion of humanity. On a sudden, without the slightest warning, without any participatory guilt or suffering, we are brought into contact with evil wearing its most awful shape, and are made to pass under that dread shadow, to touch that dark vesture hem.

The partition-wall that separated us from horror or misery incarnate is broken down. We hide our faces, hasten on, and try to shut out the vision; but ever and anon it comes back.

Thus was it with Bernarda now. Edgeworth's dark secrets might never, perhaps,

so much as be whispered in her ear. From his fierce deeds she should always stand aloof. To-day even might be one of final valediction. Yet, because she had seen him and spoken to him, life would never be the same. Evil seemed so much nearer—righteousness so much farther off!

They might to-day bid each other a last farewell; but henceforth, on her part at any rate, indifference would be feigned. She should follow his career with keener, more painful interest than before. His wrongdoing would inflict a deeper wound. She could never save him, but she should suffer for him all the more acutely.

The sound of his ring came as an absolute relief to unhappy, aimless thoughts. She did not in the least feel sure how their interview would end; but she longed to get it over—only to get it over!

He came in, wearing an ingratiating, animated smile, no cloud on his brow, the frankest, friendliest words on his lips.

"How cheerful and pleasant is this room of yours!" he said, glancing round. "A place inviting to confidential talk! And I see your pansy has renewed itself, like a phoenix. Well, do with these roses as you will."

The bouquet of magnificent crimson roses so carelessly proffered was undemonstratively received. Bernarda merely thanked him, then placed the flowers in a vase on the table.

"I am not in your way, I hope?" he said deferentially; "I hinder no engagements, keep away no visitors?"

"My Sundays are my own," Bernarda answered.

"You are happy to be able thus to keep one day in the week without a mortgage on it," he said, still gay and pleasant. "Ah, if I could do that! But we have so much to say. We had better begin at once."

The afternoon was bright, but cold, and Bernarda's fire wore a tempting look. He drew his chair nearer, and invited her to do the same. They sat opposite to each other, divided by the fireplace. Matter-of-fact, almost cold and business-like, as was his behaviour to her, he yet seemed alive to the undefined graces of this little room, the nameless charm imparted to her surroundings by a feminine presence. The elegances here were not those of an extravagant woman, only the indications of a richly-endowed, dignified, independent nature. She had given an atmosphere to the place, set upon it the seal of a strongly-marked individuality. To the conspirator,

this soothing woman's room, with its glowing hearth, its low easy-chairs enticing to intimate talk, its seclusion from the turmoil of London, seemed already a harbour of refuge, a sanctuary in which his uneasy spirit might find rest and refreshment. He was, perhaps, thinking in that momentary silence, before their confidences began, that, come what might, he must have Bernarda's friendship. She would surely not deny him that. He began, at last, abruptly—no circumlocution or preamble, the very heart of the matter plucked at and held up to the light.

"You threw out a hint, or, rather, I should say, you put a question to me the other day concerning the hidden motives of my conduct. Why have I come now to ask you to marry me? You shall know. Fear no concealments or mysteries here. In the first place, then, whilst ready to pledge myself to desperate courses for my country's sake, I cannot support the notion of having behaved badly to a woman. There you have the homely, unvarnished truth."

"I released you from your promise. We were both to blame," Bernarda said simply. "It pained me to think you had never cared for me. That was all."

Edgeworth looked at her narrowly, curiously. He leaned forward. A hasty word seemed on his lips; then the impulse was checked, and he went on:

"The world blamed you. I am thinking of your fortunes, my poor Erna! When I persuaded you into that wild flight with me, you were innocent of harm as you had been in your cradle; there was no thought dishonouring to either of us in my heart; all things were arranged for our marriage, yet, because we rashly travelled two hundred miles in each other's company, your good name was forfeited——"

"For a time only," Bernarda replied with a look of pain. "You see that I have righted myself in the world's esteem long ago. Let the past be forgotten."

"I have not forgotten it, anyhow," he said coolly. "Your worldly prospects were ruined, you had to earn a livelihood under difficult circumstances. Your family cast you off, and all this happened through fault of mine. I now want you to share the good things of life with me. It is the only atonement I can ever make."

There was nothing to read in her face, and he went on in the same undemonstrative manner;

"Now you have one motive laid bare,

and you cannot say that it is unworthy. Harken to another, and that should not discommend me to your mind either. Even I, the arch conspirator, cannot live alone. We dynamiters, as they call us, need sympathy as well as ordinary men. I have neither mother, sister, nor kinswoman. Who should share my home, the life of my fireside, but yourself?"

Once more he glanced penetratingly at her, and again, without being able to discover whether his words weighed or not, he continued:

"Not only the life of my fireside, Erna—mark that, also the life I am compelled to lead in and before the world."

He smiled as he surveyed her from head to foot, taking in each beautiful detail of the picture: the well-shaped head with its dark, glossy braids, the statuesque figure, the close-fitting winter gown of deepest, richest crimson, with the usual pansy, to-day amethyst and gold, worn by way of ornament.

"You are fitted to be the mistress of a house like mine—no mansion, certainly, yet no semi-detached villa, either, much less a sordid, gloomy lodging. All ugliness kept in the background, you should be in your element there."

Again that searching look on his part, that enigmatic silence on hers.

"Another and yet another reason," he went on, almost gaily. "As I said before, in all matters that concern our two selves only, I will be quite open with you. You are no common woman, your spirit is high. No ordinary nobleness is yours. When"—here he watched the effect of his words, evidently prepared for a protest—"when I have won you over to my way of thinking, you might render glorious service to your people, your religion, your country."

Her passiveness was at an end now. She bent forward, and, no longer able to control herself, caught one of his hands in hers in an agony of entreaty and remonstrance.

"Not a word more," she cried. "If you ever loved this poor Erna at all, not a word more."

## AN INSECT PLAGUE.

"LITTLE strokes fell great oaks," says the old proverb; and "He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little," said the Eastern sage.

The truth thus embodied has been

illustrated by many a natural parable—by “the continual dropping of water which weareth away stone;” by the little trickling rill, which, neglected, has sapped the foundation of some mighty building; by the grains of drifting sand which, at first unheeded, have gone on accumulating and encroaching till they have overwhelmed broad tracts, and transformed once fertile land into a barren waste.

Equally impressive are the illustrations to be derived from the world of animal life. In New Zealand and Australia the incautious introduction of a few sparrows and rabbits has caused those colonies incalculable trouble and loss, and has resulted in the destruction of thousands of acres of valuable land.

But perhaps the most forcible of all illustrations of the power of small things, is furnished us by the insect plagues which from time to time have ravaged divers countries; when creatures, in themselves insignificant, have, by their multitude and combined force, proved themselves to be in truth most powerful and vexatious foes, taxing man's boasted skill and ingenuity to the very uttermost in the endeavour to cope with them, and to maintain his boasted supremacy over the feebler things of creation.

Of all destructive foes none are more dreaded in most Eastern lands than the locusts, whose dire visitations may well be deemed national calamities. In point of fact, the lands which are exempt from their occasional presence are the favoured few. A very few details of their invasion of Southern Russia, in the years 1879 and 1880, will give us some idea of their multitude. They fell upon the province of Caucasus, utterly destroying vineyards and gardens; blockading the streets so that traffic was suspended; filling the ovens, so that for several days baking was quite out of the question; and so choking the water-courses that not a cup of water could be drunk until filtered.

In Georgia they fairly routed a detachment of Russian troops, who, not liking to turn aside on their march repelled by mere insects, attempted to face the locust-army, although report said it covered twenty square miles of country. So the soldiers advanced, but soon found themselves literally covered by the clinging, creeping insects, which crawled all over them, until finally the men fairly turned and fled, slipping and sliding as they ran over the crushed and oily bodies of their myriad

foes. For forty-eight hours they were detained, taking refuge in a village, and assisting the inhabitants to kill millions of the invaders, whose corpses they carted off to manure the fields, which, however, were, in the meantime, stripped of every blade of grass or corn, and the trees shorn of every green leaf.

On the road from Tiflis to Poti, the locusts lay so thick on the line, that the trains were obstructed. Large districts of Southern Russia were swept as bare of all vegetation, as if a fire had raged over the land, and hundreds of peasants, utterly beggared, abandoned their homes, to seek bread wherever it might be found. In the province of Cherson alone, a sum of fifty thousand roubles was voted by Government for expenditure in the effort to free the land of this plague; in another district, twenty thousand persons were employed daily for three months in the same work; the Government expenditure on the whole organisation was estimated at two hundred thousand roubles, without any calculation of the loss on crops of all descriptions.

Another notable scene of locust-plague was Algeria in the year 1866, when the damage done by these insects was estimated at fifty million francs, and resulted in a famine so appalling that two hundred thousand natives died of starvation.

In reading all accounts of the very varied methods adopted in different countries in order to check the ravages of this all-devouring foe, it is difficult to understand why the small ditches, so much recommended, should prove so effectual a barrier to locust progress. It cannot be by reason of the perpendicular sides, as the insects have no hesitation in walking up the perpendicular walls of a house. Neither, when such ditches are flooded, is it evident how two feet of water can impede their advance, since they have no difficulty in mastering broad rivers. Thus Professor Riley—referring to the march of young locust armies in Russia, and to the statement of Döngingk that he has seen them swim over the Dniestr for a stretch of one and a quarter German miles (equal to about five English miles) in layers seven or eight inches thick—states that the very same thing has been observed in the progress of the Rocky Mountain locust.

For instance, in 1875, near Lane, in Kansas, millions crossed the Pottowatomie Creek, which is about four rods wide, while other regiments of the vast army crossed

the various tributaries of the Missouri at numerous points. They marched steadily on to the water's edge, and on reaching it, the foremost ranks jumped in, and the next, in springing, alighted on the first, till they actually bridged the stream, and on this living pontoon the great body passed to the other side. In the same district, two of these mighty armies met on the river bluff, one moving east, and the other moving west; both turned their course northward, and the united forces marched down the bluff till they came to a perpendicular ledge of rock about thirty feet in height, over which they leapt, in a sheet apparently six or seven inches thick, like a brown glittering waterfall, and with a rushing sound, like the roar of a cataract.

Their course, and the velocity of their flight, seems generally to be decided by the direction of the wind, though instances are on record of their flying right in the teeth of a strong breeze, scarcely making a mile an hour. When there is no wind they float about in the air like swarming bees, and at the approach of rain, fold their wings, and suffer themselves to fall heavily to the ground, thousands being sometimes thus killed by their own weight striking on stones. When carried by a gale, they are swept along like autumn leaves, their rate varying from four to fifty miles per hour. As an instance of the distance to which they may thus be carried, there is such evidence as that of the captain of the *Harrisburg*, which vessel, while on her way from Bordeaux to New Orleans, when at a distance of twelve hundred miles from land, was boarded during a heavy rain-squall by a large number of locusts, which filled the air and covered the sails. They proved to be a European branch of the family—i.e., the *Aceridium perigrinum*.

Of the partiality of this destructive race for Western and Central America, we have unfortunately only too certain proof in the ravages reported from time to time by the farmers of different States. According to the report of the Entomological Commission, upwards of two hundred and seventy species of locusts are known to contribute their share to the damage done in the country north of Mexico, and that their Southern brethren are not far behind them in the work of mischief is evident, as a recent letter from Guatemala tells of a single estate which in one night has lost seventy thousand coffee-trees, which were so entirely stripped that not one green leaf remained.

It is not, however, my purpose to touch on so vast a subject as the locust troubles of America, but rather to glance at one little corner of Europe. Happily it is not often that locust ravages so seriously affect British possessions as to call for serious action on the part of Government.

This, however, is now the case in Cyprus, where the appalling swarms of locusts have recently become a matter calling forth the gravest efforts of the legislative and executive authorities. It is a contest between man and his too numerous subjects, quite as serious as the rabbit and sparrow wars which still rage so furiously in New Zealand and Australia.

Some idea of the gravity of the situation may be formed when we consider that, notwithstanding the destruction, on the small island of Cyprus, of about one thousand three hundred and thirty tons of locusts' eggs, between July, 1881, and February, 1882, there, nevertheless, remained such quantities, that upwards of twelve thousand tons of locusts were destroyed in one district of the island, namely, Famagusta, before the end of May. And we may safely assume that, as the locusts were quite as numerous in Nicosia, which is the other district, the destruction was probably pretty nearly as large as in Famagusta. Supposing, however, that it was a third less, this would give us about twenty thousand tons of these poor little victims—innocent sinners

Who, though they did evil,  
Yet meant no harm.

And, notwithstanding this great slaughter, such multitudes survived, that the number which appeared in the following spring seems to have exceeded the number of those already destroyed.

Some of the official statistics are exceedingly interesting. In July, 1880, Sir Robert Biddulph, Her Majesty's High Commissioner for Cyprus, reported to the Home Government the very alarming increase of locusts—not an imported swarm, brought by strong winds from the shores of Syria—but the indigenous produce of the isle.

Seeing that these vast swarms threatened a public calamity, it was obvious that active measures must at once be taken for their destruction, and the first official regulations were framed with a view to carrying out a thorough collection of their eggs.

Under the Turkish rule, such visitations had been promptly met by turning out



the entire population to take their share of this work under compulsion. In 1870, when the locust swarms were unusually serious, Saïd Pasha, the energetic Governor of Cyprus, made a tour of the island from village to village, taking with him the Archbishop, Bishops, and leading inhabitants, stringently enforcing the collection of eggs, with the threat that unless the people collected the full proportion of one kilo (i.e., about sixteen pounds) of locust eggs per man, he would turn out all the eggs again, and leave them to hatch; and to prove himself in earnest he suffered none to be destroyed, but kept them all stored in locked magazines, till the full quota had been brought in.

Under the British Government such compulsory work, though strongly recommended by the Archbishop, was deemed too arbitrary. A regulation was issued requiring every adult male between the ages of eighteen and sixty to bring in half a kilo of locust eggs as his share of the tax, and deliver them to the authorities at one of three specified places, there to be destroyed. By this arrangement, those whose business did not admit of their collecting the eggs in person, were able to do so by proxy, and the peasants who were best acquainted with the uncultivated tracts of land near the hills, which are the favourite breeding-grounds of the locusts, were able to carry on a lively business in collecting and selling this strange grain.

By a singular instinct the mother locust never deposits her eggs in cultivated ground. A vast swarm may alight on a field, and devour every green herb, but not an egg will be found on the ground liable soon to be disturbed by man. Should there, however, be left a patch of rough ground unfit for tillage, there the eggs are deposited in thousands, just under the surface of the soil. They are laid in May and June, and lie safely cradled in the earth till the following spring.

When the earth begins to grow warm in the end of February or early in March, then the eggs are hatched, and myriads of tiny locusts suddenly appear, ready to commence their career of destruction. Owing to the nature of the barren rocky ground selected as hatching-beds on the low, rough hills, it is almost impossible for the most careful search to discover more than a small proportion of this hidden grain; consequently, as I have already stated, notwithstanding that the reduced tax brought in upwards of a thousand tons

of eggs in the autumn and winter of 1881, such appalling swarms were hatched in the spring of 1882, that it became necessary for the Government to adopt most stringent measures to meet the danger.

A formal campaign was accordingly planned, and we may form some idea of the magnitude of the preparations required, when we learn that the cost of this locust war for one year has been thirty-two thousand pounds. This includes twelve thousand two hundred and sixty-two pounds—upwards of sixty-one thousand dollars—paid for locusts' eggs. The manufacture of five thousand five hundred screens, each fifty yards in length, eight thousand one hundred and eighty traps, and various tools and materials, amounted to eleven thousand three hundred and sixty-one pounds, and the balance went to pay for the services of fifteen hundred labourers, fifty-two overseers, ten superintendents, and two chief superintendents.

The screens here alluded to are strips of thick canvas, a yard in width and fifty yards in length. These are hung on low poles so as, if possible, to surround every patch of ground where a large number of infant locusts have made their appearance. The lower edge of the cloth is buried in the earth, so that none may creep below it. A strip of wax-cloth is sewn along the upper edge, both as a means of strengthening the cloth and to prevent the locusts from climbing over the screens. Near the cloth, a row of pits are dug, from one to two yards in depth, and along their edges are laid wooden boards, edged with bands of zinc. It is now found that wax-cloth answers the same purpose—namely, that of preventing the locusts from climbing out of the pit, and is more portable.

For ten or twelve days after the locusts are hatched they are unable to hop, so they walk steadily forward and fall by thousands into the pits. After this period they are liable to hop over the screens, so it is desirable to have a second row of pits outside of these.

The common greyish-brown locust hatches about the 10th March, lays its eggs in the middle of May, and dies about the end of June. The small red locust hatches in the beginning of April, lays its eggs in July, and dies in the beginning of August. The large green locust hatches in the beginning of April, lays its eggs and dies in July. The large light-brown locust hatches early in April, lays in July, and dies in the beginning of August.

It is obviously desirable to kill as large a number as possible before the eggs have been deposited. Consequently, the workmen are required to relieve guard day and night; indeed, night has special advantages, as the locust cannot fly until the morning sun has dried its dewy wings, and as the creatures creep for shelter under every bush, it is the duty of the workmen to beat them out with palm-branches and kill as many as possible.

The locusts which contrive to escape from the screen, or which are hatched in such secluded spots as to elude detection, march onwards at the rate of two miles a day. Sometimes they come to a stream of running water, and in the endeavour to cross it are often washed down for miles, and perhaps struggle to shore at some spot whence the workmen had departed, fondly hoping that it had been effectually cleared. So there the locusts find a clear field, where they can deposit their eggs without fear of further molestation.

Thus it came to pass that, after all the care and expense bestowed on their destruction in 1882, it was estimated that the multitude of eggs which had been safely deposited was so great that the locust swarms of 1883 would certainly be in excess of those of the previous year.

Experience has led to a decision that the effort to reduce the swarms by destroying the eggs is practically useless. So large a proportion are certain to escape that the expense and trouble of combating the survivors is quite as great as though the whole had been permitted to hatch. It was, therefore, resolved that the egg-tax should be abolished, and the locust breeding-grounds be left undisturbed.

Preparations for carrying on the war now form an annual and important item in the national expenses of the isle, and the campaign is prosecuted with such vigour that there is good reason to hope that in, perhaps, another year, the locust pest may be effectually stamped out, and the island may reap such increase of rich harvests as shall haply refund the heavy expenditure now incurred.

I omitted to mention that one very good reason for not wasting time and money in the search for locusts' eggs is, that destroying these involves the destruction of a most useful ally—namely, the grub of the bee-fly, which devours the eggs. Of those which were taken in the autumn of 1881, five per cent. were found to be thus affected.

It is somewhat singular that in the statistics connected with the locusts of Cyprus, no mention whatever is made of any other natural foe, whereas on the neighbouring mainland, and in Arabia, they are the food of almost every living creature, from man downwards. Horses and camels eat them as they munch their provender; dogs and hyenas, big birds and little birds—from eagles down to desert larks—all feast upon them, while the russet starling of Asia Minor kills them apparently simply for sport, continuing the work of slaughter till it is weary. Then, after resting a while, and washing its beak in the nearest pool or stream, it returns with renewed vigour to resume the work of destruction.

### THE CRIES OF LONDON.

WHAT Charles Lamb called "The all-sweeping besom of societarian reformation" is fast removing the last specimens of the famous London cries. We have grown so fastidious and so sensitive to noise, that even the modest tinkle of the muffin-bell in suburban neighbourhoods is threatened with suppression. The dustman's bell is extinct, though the less musical and far noisier cry of "Dust ho!" is still heard. Our breakfast hour is still ushered in by the cry of "Mi-eau," and occasionally some poor old dame may be heard pitifully wailing "Cree-sees; fine young cree-sees." On winter evenings we may still hear the distant cry of "Orl 'ot!" betraying the whereabouts of the dealer in hot baked potatoes. Our feline favourites are still aroused from their comfortable naps on the rug by the shrill "'Eet, 'eet!" of the man who on his gaudily-painted pony-trap designates himself as a purveyor of cat's-meat. Yet practically we may say the cries of London are dead. Doubtless there are many who, in their love of old fashions and of the good old times, are sorry for it. There always have been, and always will be, defenders of old customs and local peculiarities, no matter what annoyances may be connected with them. Addison, in his *Spectator*, says, "There is nothing which more astonishes a foreigner, and frights a country squire, than the cries of London. My good friend, Sir Roger, often declares that he cannot get them out of his head, or go to sleep for them the first week that he is in town. On the contrary, Will Honeycomb calls them the Ramage

de la Ville, and prefers them to the sounds of larks and nightingales, with all the music of the fields and woods."

Let us glance backward into the good old days at some of these "town warblings," that we may be able to judge of the extent of our loss.

London, save in some of the main thoroughfares, is now almost as quiet by night as a country village, and the only sound that greets the wakeful ear is the heavy, measured tread of the policeman, or the music of the "harmless, necessary cat." Yet our forefathers actually had paid officials, whose duty it was to roam the streets at night and thump upon the doors with a wooden club, at the same time yelling out the hour and the state of the weather. Smollett, writing little more than a hundred years ago, makes Squire Bramble say: "I start every hour from my sleep at the horrid noise of the watchmen bawling the hour through every street, and thundering at every door; a set of useless fellows who serve no other purpose but that of disturbing the repose of the inhabitants." Addison says: "The watchman's thump at midnight startles us in our beds as much as the breaking in of a thief." The watchman with his thump seems to have been an improvement on the bellman, who was first instituted in 1556 for the purpose of going round the ward by night to ring his bell, and exhort the inhabitants with a loud voice to take care of their fires and lights, to help the poor, and pray for the dead.

The town crier seems to have been suggested by the noise of the watchman's bell, for, in 1564, an Act of Common Council ordained that all persons who should have occasion to sell their household goods, leases, or other articles of a similar kind, should cause their intentions to be made known publicly by a man with a bell, and that the property should then be sold by the common outcrier, who was to receive for his trouble one farthing in the pound.

Referring again to the dustman, there seems to have been a different system to ours at the beginning of this century, for a writer of that time says: "Towards morning the streets became quieter, and we were composing ourselves for a doze when the tinkling of a bell, and the cry of 'Dust oh!' roused us. This was the summons of a man, with a cart, to the maids of each family to bring out their dust."

The sweep's seems to have been one of

the earliest morning cries. Charles Lamb speaks of him as coming forth with the dawn, and relates his delight when a child at hearing the sweep's shout of discovered daylight, and at seeing him emerge in safety brandishing his weapon. In Hogarth's picture of the Enraged Musician, may be seen a sweep showing himself from a chimney-top in the act of clanging brush and shovel together by way of calling attention to the fact that he had performed his task thoroughly.

People must have been early risers in old days, for the market-gardeners seem to have cried their wares in the streets as they wended their way to market; for Smollett's Squire Bramble writes: "By five o'clock I start out of bed, in consequence of the still more dreadful alarm made by the country carts and rustics bellowing green-peas under my window."

As in our day, "Cucumbers!" seems to have been one of the London cries, though cried apparently in a more musical manner than the "fine cowkimbars" of the present day. A writer in the Spectator says: "I am always pleased with that particular time of year which is proper for the pickling of dill and cucumbers; but, alas! this cry, like the song of the nightingale, is not heard above two months. It would, therefore, be worth while to consider whether the same air might not in some cases be adapted to other words." This last sentence makes one anxious to know to what musical strains they sold cucumbers in those days.

Dr. Johnson refers to the crying of turnips in the streets in his burlesque lines,

If the man who turnips cries,  
Cry not when his father dies,  
'Tis a proof that he had rather  
Have a turnip than a father.

The Spectator alludes to "the excessive alarms with which several boisterous rustics infest our streets in turnip season, and which are more inexcusable, because these are wares which are in no danger of cooling upon their hands."

In a pleasing article upon dreams, Addison makes a very humorous use of the fact of these street cries and noises rousing sleepers from their dreams. He says: "I have received numerous complaints from several delicious dreamers, desiring me to invent some method of silencing those noisy slaves whose occupations lead them to take their early rounds about the city in the morning, doing a deal of mischief,

and working strange confusion in the affairs of its inhabitants. Several monarchs have done me the honour to acquaint me how often they have been shook from their respective thrones by the rattling of a coach, or the rumbling of a wheelbarrow. And many private gentlemen, I find, have been bawled out of vast estates by fellows not worth threepence. A fair lady was just upon the point of being married to a young, handsome, rich, ingenious nobleman, when an impertinent tinker passing by forbid the banns; and an hopeful youth who had been newly advanced to great honour and preferment, was forced by a neighbouring cobbler to resign all for an old song. It has been represented to me, that those inconsiderable rascals do nothing but go about dissolving of marriages, and spoiling of fortunes, impoverishing the rich, and ruining great people, interrupting beauties in the midst of their conquests and generals in the course of their victories. A boisterous peripatetic hardly goes through a street without waking half-a-dozen kings and princes to open their shops or clean shoes. I have by me a letter from a young statesman, who in five or six hours came to be Emperor of Europe, after which he made war upon the Great Turk, routed him horse and foot, and was crowned lord of the universe in Constantinople; the conclusion of all his successes is that on the 12th instant, about seven in the morning, his imperial majesty was deposed by a chimney-sweeper."

"Cherry-ripe!" one of the oldest of the London cries, seems to be quite extinct. Several of our old poets have allusions to it. John Lydgate, in his poem of London Lickpenny, written about the end of the fourteenth century, says:

"Hot peascodes!" one began to cry,  
"Strawberry ripe! and cherries in the rise."\*

A poet of the early part of the seventeenth century (speaking of his lady's face) says:

There cherries grow that none may buy  
Till "Cherry ripe" themselves do cry.

Nell Gwynne used to sing a song, written by Herrick, which, as it is short, the reader will be glad to have quoted in full for its own sake:

Cherry ripe, ripe, ripe, I cry,  
Full and fair ones; come and buy!  
If so be you ask me where  
They do grow? I answer, there,  
Where my Julia's lips do smile,  
There's the land, or cherry-isle;  
Whose plantations fully show  
All the year where cherries grow.

\* On the branch.

"Saloop—loop—loop!" was formerly a well-known cry in London. The decoction sold under this name seems, however, to have been superseded by coffee when that article became cheap. Saloop seems to have been sold down to modern times at street-stalls, from a late hour at night to early morning, just as coffee is sold now. Charles Lamb says of it: "There is a composition, the groundwork of which I have understood to be the 'sweet wood' yclept sassafras. This wood boiled down to a kind of tea, and tempered with an infusion of milk and sugar, hath to some tastes a delicacy beyond the China luxury. This is saloop, the precious herb-woman's darling; the delight of the early gardener; the delight, and oh! I fear, too often the envy of the unpennied sweep." He goes on to speak of those "who from stalls, and under open sky dispense the same savoury mess to humbler customers, at that dead time of the dawn, when (as extremes meet) the rake reeling home from his midnight cups, and the hard-handed artisan leaving his bed to resume the premature labours of the day, jostle one another."

Dealers in eatables seem to have given rise to most of the cries. Periwinkles are still sold to the cry of "Wink—wink—wink!—penny wink;" and we hear also of "Boston shrimps!" whilst a big catch of mackerel on the coast is advertised over all London the next day by the cry of "Mack-er-eel—fine mack-er-eel—four a shillin'!"

In the old poem of London Lickpenny, before alluded to, we find the lines:

Then comes me one cried Hot sheep's feet!  
One cried Mackerel! Rushes green! another  
'gan greet.

Cooked sheep's-feet are still sold in the poorer quarters of London under the name of trotters. Rushes were used for the purpose of covering floors in houses of the better class, and even in royal chambers, so late as the time of Queen Elizabeth. The stage was strewed with rushes in Shakespeare's time. The floors of churches were also covered in like manner, and in many parts of the country the annual renewing of the rushes in the church was made an important rustic ceremonial. The festival, known as Rush-bearing, was kept up till very recent times, and probably lingers to the present day in some of the remoter parts of the kingdom.

We have a large number of street vendors of flowers, and their cry, "Penny a bunch, violets!" "Wall-flowers—sweet

wall-flowers!" are not unwelcome; whilst the cry of "Lavender—sweet lavender!" reminds us that summer is drawing to a close. A writer of the first quarter of the present century says: "To the east of Temple Bar, the flower-girl is the herald of spring. She cries 'Cowslips!' then she screams, 'Bow-pots—sweet and pretty bow-pots!' When I was a child I got a bow-pot of as many wallflowers and harebells as I could then hold in my hand, with a sprig of sweetbriar at the back of the bunch, for a halfpenny—such a handful!"

The quieter streets and squares of London are occasionally roused in winter evenings by men (generally in couples) who shout out "Alarming news!" They generally contrive, by each crying a different portion of their news (as in singing a round) to confuse their hearers with such stray items as "orful trajerdees!" "neighbourhood!" "square," or "street," "five children," "trajerdee," "orful," etc.; and they always demand a high price for their paper, which seldom contains any very special information. Formerly it was the custom for newsmen to cry their papers through the streets, and they carried a tin horn wherewith to attract notice. Hone, in his *Everyday Book*, says: "Bloody news! Great victory! or more frequently, Extraordinary gazette! were, till recently, the usual loud bellowings of fellows with stentorian lungs, accompanied by a loud blast of a long tin horn, which announced to the delighted populace of London the martial achievements of the modern Marlborough." A copy of the gazette or newspaper they were crying, was generally affixed under the hat-band, in front, and their demand for a newspaper was generally one shilling. The use of a horn was soon afterwards prohibited. In the days of the original Marlborough the news was cried in the same fashion, for we read in the *Spectator*: "A bloody battle alarms the town from one end to another in an instant. Every motion of the French is published in so great a hurry that one would think the enemy were at our gates." About this same period was published a poem on the death of one of these newsmen, known as Old Bennet, the News-Cryer. The poet is struck by the sudden silence that through each street was spread:

As if the soul of London had been dead.

When Fame informs him that:

Bennet, the prince of hawkers, is no more;  
Bennet, my herald on the British shore;

Bennet who when:

The list'ning town he would amuse,  
Made echo tremble with his bloody news.

Fame goes on to say that:

Homer, the first of hawkers that is known,  
Great news from Troy cried up and down the town.

None like him has there been for ages past,  
Till our stentorian Bennet came at last.  
Homer and Bennet were in this agreed,  
Homer was blind, and Bennet could not read.

The cry of the retailers of small coal, common in the last century, has of late years been revived, and our poorer streets resound with, "Bea' coal, shillin' a 'under!" The cry of the bellows-mender is long extinct, a pair of bellows being now rarely seen; but the scissors-grinder still disturbs our quiet streets with his hideous yell, generally adding to his "Scissors to grind," the cry of "Pots and kettles to mend." In the last century the corn-cutter used to wander the streets with his extraordinary cry of, "Work if I had it!" but his successor of the present day establishes himself in showy quarters in some leading thoroughfare, has a big brass plate and a coloured advertisement, styles himself a chiropodist, and would faint at the idea of tramping the streets in search of "patients."

Another old London cry which has been revived during the present century is that of "Clean your shoes." The ancient shoe-black used to take his stand at a street-corner, his stock-in-trade being a brush, a ball of blacking, and a three-legged stool. Gay describes him in the lines:

Go thrive, at some frequented corner stand;  
This brush I give thee—grasp it in thy hand;  
Temper the foot within this vase of oil,  
And let the tripod aid thee in the toil.  
On this methinks I see the walking crew  
At thy request support the miry shoe;  
The foot grows black that was with dirt embrown'd,  
And in thy pocket jingling halfpence sound.

The youth straight chose his post, the labour ply'd  
Where branching streets from Charing Cross divide;  
His treble voice resounds along the mews,  
And Whitehall echoes, "Clean your honour's shoes!"

The pie-man seems to have died out. One of his representatives of the last century is mentioned in the *Spectator*, as being a well-known character, under the name of Colly-Molly-Puff.

We have already alluded to the cry of "Muffins!" which still heralds in tea-time in the suburbs; but the cry of "Beer ho!" which used to be heard in similar neighbourhoods, is now quite extinct. Many people, indeed, would now be puzzled to state the use of the curious long tray, something like a double book-shelf, on which the man carried a dozen or so of

measures of beer to his customers. Boz, in his sketches describing the streets by night, speaks of the muffin-boy ringing his way down the street slowly; and further on speaks of the "nine-o'clock beer," who comes round with a lantern in front of his tray, and as he lends Mrs. Walker yesterday's Tiser, remarks, that he's blessed if he can hardly hold the pot, much less feel the paper, for it's one of the bitterest nights he ever felt.

There is one well-known cry which sends a thrill of excitement through the frame of every listener. To the timid it gives a feeling of dread and horror, others it rouses to activity, and stirs them to excited and energetic participation in the event of the hour. This is the cry of "Fire! Fire!" People about to retire for the night rush half-dressed to the windows, and try to guess by the reflection in the sky what part of the town is visited by this calamity. The tired man with slippered feet stretched out towards the fender is suddenly roused to activity. His slippers are thrown aside, his boots rapidly pulled on, and in a couple of minutes he is on his way to the burning building. The streets, a short time before quiet and deserted, now resound with the tramp of many feet, the voices of men and boys, and the rapid rolling of wheels.

A far more awful London cry than this, one of which, the very mention even now, carries a feeling of dread and sorrowful reflection to every thoughtful mind, was that which at one time resounded daily through the plague-stricken streets of the old city, as the carts rolled slowly through the deserted thoroughfares, past door after door on which was painted the cross of dread significance, while the callous attendants called with hollow voice, "Bring out your dead!"

Let us, in conclusion, turn from this sad remembrance, and close with the cry which must always be popular with those who love to keep up old festivals and to "keep its memory green" by decking their walls with the dark-green leaf and the shining red berry. To such there is something jovial and heart-stirring in the stentorian shouts of the itinerant dealers in "Holly ho! Holly ho! and mistletoe!"

#### ONE YEAR.

SOFTLY the lone wind means the year just dead.  
 'Tis meet that thou should'st wail, oh, winter wind!  
 Sure it were but unkind  
 Did summer's wealth of flow'rets deck the bed  
 Whereon she lies, whom I have loved so well,  
 I scarce can bear to hear her parting knell.

'Tis well, oh, winter wind, that thou should'st mean!  
 I could not suffer spring's sweet birds to sing

Nor shall the joy bells ring,  
 Now she I loved lies there quite dead, alone,  
 Gone from me evermore, passed quite away,  
 Past the horizon of our mortal day.

Dear, dead, fair year, I will not call thee old;  
 I loved thee so. Within thy swift rolled space

Life looked me in the face;  
 Looked in mine heart, gave me his ring of gold,  
 Then gazed I for the last time in the eyes  
 Of my lost youth—there, next thy heart, he lies.

So fold him in thy shadowy arms, dead year;  
 I felt it sad to know that he was gone,

For ever passed on;  
 Leaving me weighted with a growing fear  
 That I had parted with my young fresh morn,  
 Losing it all before I knew him born.

Tears fast must fall, dear year, upon thy brow,  
 They are as pearls upon thy placid face!

The coffin-lid is now  
 Half-closed, but still for just one little space  
 I stand beside and gaze. The wind sounds wild,  
 And sobs and wails like to some stricken child.

Good-bye, dear year! God keep thee next his heart,  
 And give thee back to me, when death is passed,  
 And I am called at last

From all life's disappointed pain to part.  
 I ask no better gift from Heaven's vast store,  
 Than all unchanged to hold thee evermore.

#### GETTING ON THE WAR-PATH.

"THE old work is beginning again, then!" said a grizzled sergeant, who stood at the corner of a street in the grey, foggy morning—one of a crowd that had gathered and was still gathering, recruited from every side and growing denser at every moment. The air was keen and nipping with frost, and the sun hung low in the sky—a dull red ball, that glowed without heat, and whose rays were powerless to penetrate the thick white mist. Red and portentous the sun, and grey and grizzly the mist, combined to make the scene as weird and mysterious as can be. A curtain of darkness in the air, with gilded pinnacles rising into the clearer air above, suggested the towering mass of the Houses of Parliament on the other side of the way; there the hazy outline of something like a bridge stretched out into the vague distance; a misty etching of human forms that seemed to hang over the abyss, with points and pinnacles, all of human heads and shoulders, rising out here and there. Out of the mist came a string of all kinds of wheeled vehicles that struggled through the crowd as best they might: parcels-vans for the early trains, mail-carts in red and yellow, butchers' vans loaded with frozen carcasses from the docks, and greengrocers' carts fresh from Covent Garden.

Towards the park the air was clearer, and you could make out the roadway

occupied by an ever-moving crowd, and in the extreme distance a hazy network of twigs and branches, and it was in this direction that all eyes were turned for the first gleam of scarlet and gold and the glitter of arms, while a hush fell over the crowd as everybody listened for the first strains of martial music. There was a kind of solemnity, indeed, about this great gathering beneath the canopy of mist; this great unarmed, peaceful crowd of every rank and class, from the Whitechapel costermonger to princes of the blood and nobles of high degree, assembled to give a parting cheer to the Guards, who were just about to embark on a distant perilous expedition; as if it were felt that the event marked a sudden and stirring crisis in the national life. In the words of the grizzled sergeant, the old work was beginning again.

Some may have called to mind other similar scenes in former days. It is not so long, indeed, since we had the Guards marching off on their way to Egypt, but that seemed an episode of only temporary importance, and it would have been easy then to predict within a week or two when our friends the Guards would come back to their old quarters. But now the heavens seem dark with portents, and who can say what enemies they may have to meet, or how long it may be before we see them once more come marching home? The gloom and mist of the morning, its doubtful presages whether the sun should burst forth in splendour or deeper darkness veil the face of nature, seemed to harmonise with the occasion.

It was not long before there was a general movement in the crowd, as an irregular column of people—a column in which had gathered what there was of the rough element in the crowd—came thrusting along the roadway, marching in burlesque imitation of the more regular column that followed, as the band of the regiment came in sight, the last strains of martial music dying away in the crowd. For such was the press that the band were unable to sound their instruments, and the big drum was carried away by the sheer pressure of the crowd, the drummer attached to it being also whirled away like a leaf in the stream. Then came the fighting men, their white helmets showing over the heads of the crowd, a long thin column stretching away far out of sight. If the crowd squeezed them out of military formation it was all in friendliness; proud was the civilian who recognised an acquaintance among the youthful-looking

faces under the white helmets, and often a young woman would be passed through the thickest of the crush till she reached her sweetheart in the ranks, and marched away with him. Not for very far, though, for here were the granite steps close at hand, leading down to the misty chasm, where the funnels of several steamers might be dimly discerned; and down these granite steps the men disappeared, leaving wives, sweethearts, friends behind them.

It was still a fateful, doubtful morning, the sun now burning to a bright glowing orange colour, and sending a ripple of flame right across the turbid rush of waters, and again paling to a mere red wafer stuck against the inky skies—whether the fog should conquer or the sun seemed long doubtful. For a while the river was lighted up, not by direct sunshine, but by the reflected light from a bank of white clouds overhead, and the gleam lasted just long enough to bring the whole scene into view: the embankment lined with dense masses, while every lamp-post and column supported an adventurous swarm of spectators, who risked a watery grave to secure a glimpse of the spectacle. The bridges, too, were all crammed, and a general shout rolled along the bank and over the bridges, as the spectral craft shot by, hurried along by tide and steam—a shout that was echoed from all the craft in the river, and carried on with shrieks from steam-whistles, and howls from fog-horns, from ship to ship, and from bank to bank, till the whole river was alive with it. And there in the pale gleam of reflected light were the white helmets gleaming in long rows upon the steamers—helmets sometimes waved aloft in acknowledgment of the cheers from the shore, while a hoarse shout rose at intervals from the departing soldiers.

They are gone, and all is over. The crowds disperse as quickly as does the morning mist, now that the sun has fairly broken through—they are away to their warehouses and their counting-houses, to their banks and offices. "Don't you wish you were with them, Alf?" says one bank-clerk to another. And a distinct element in the crowd was the unemployed, hundreds of stout fellows, who looked upon the warmly-clad and well-fed soldiers with something like envy. Indeed, it would have been easy enough to have raised a battalion or two of good recruits there on the Embankment, if the opportunity had been offered. As for the young men employed in the City, there is plenty of martial ardour

among them, which finds an outlet in the Volunteer service.

And now that so many of our soldiers are gone, our Volunteers come more prominently to the front — and comparing their crowded ranks with some of the skeleton battalions that are left behind, there rises a feeling of thankfulness that we have got all these strong Volunteer regiments at our back. It seems unaccountable, indeed, that mistaken parsimony should deny these men the full equipment necessary to their efficiency; though it is quite possible that the deficiency of our Volunteer army in this respect has been unintentionally a little exaggerated. Most of our metropolitan Volunteers are provided with their new Martini-Henry rifles, and are proud of this really splendid weapon; and we met the other day a strong and soldier-like regiment, trudging through the rain and slush, with great-coats, haversacks, and water-bottles, who looked quite fit, then and there, to march anywhere.

As for transport—well, every Volunteer regiment ought to have sufficient waggon-power to carry its baggage and ammunition; but in time of need there would be no lack of Volunteer transport, if only it had been properly organised beforehand. And this organisation would be easy enough on the basis of a general census of horses and carriages, and their descriptions, which ought to be carried out without delay. Perhaps an Act of Parliament would be necessary to effect this; but there would be no difficulty in a voluntary census throughout the country, if only it were conducted by the military authorities without any suspicion of a movement in the direction of licenses or taxation.

Anyhow, it is pleasing to find that the Volunteer force reached last year the highest point yet achieved in force and efficiency, with upwards of two hundred and eight thousand effective men in its ranks, the highest total yet reached, the force having been steadily increasing ever since the year 1873, when the number of effectives had fallen to one hundred and fifty-three thousand.

Thus if it ever should happen that we have to meet the enemy in the gate, there is little fear of Britain's sons being wanting. The real danger would be lest the army administration should break down, overwhelmed by the sudden stress upon it. For an army in these days of scientific warfare is an exceedingly complicated machine, in which an ill-fitting or fractured part disorders the whole. An army

requires guns of many kinds, and the appliances connected with them are constantly becoming more complex, ingenious, and delicate. Projectiles, too, with every variety of charge and fuse; carriages of all kinds; transport, ambulance, and ammunition, are required; and these, again, have connected with them hundreds of stores, every one of which must be in its place when wanted. Then there are small arms, and all the innumerable details connected with their supply; entrenching-tools, engineer equipments, telegraph and signalling apparatus, without which an army may be said to be blind and defenceless. All this has to be in readiness, with harness, saddlery, and a vast camp equipment. Clothing, too, has to be considered, with its innumerable details, with the supply of boots and leggings indispensable, and not to be improvised at a moment's notice.

With all this the actual "commissariat" has not been touched—the supply, that is, of provisions, fuel, and light for the men, and provender for the horses. And this service is provided for by a department more or less independent of that charged with the supply of munitions of war. The transport of both branches is also under separate management, and the organisation of the whole supply services in a harmoniously working staff has been a task which has proved too difficult for succeeding generations of administrators. At the date of the Crimean War, the stress of war, which broke down existing arrangements, called into being all kinds of expedients. There was organised a Land Transport Corps, and then an Army Works Corps, which had only a short-lived existence, and then the Commissariat was enlarged, and made a department of the War Office, but still remained under civilian influences. From that time, as one school of doctrinaires or the other has had the ascendancy, one system after another has been adopted and thrown aside. Now concentration has had its day, and now decentralisation. There was an era of "Control" when a great department was constituted that dealt with everything, from the buttons of a soldier's jacket to the bread that he ate, and the bullocks that were killed for his sustenance. But control, though far-reaching in its aims, was feeble in constitution, and died a natural death, and its organisation has been resolved into its original elements, clustered mostly about the general heads of Commissariat, Transport, and Ordnance Store.



The commissariat, although it still retains many of its old civilian staff, is now officered exclusively from the commissioned ranks of the army, while its minor appointments are nearly all bestowed on non-commissioned officers. In time of peace, its duties consist in dealing with contractors, inspecting their supplies, and taking account of the delivery of such supplies to the troops. In time of war, a commissariat officer is in charge of each division of the army, with divisional stores for supply and issue, while attached to the head-quarters of the army are the staff of the Commissary-General, with whom rest the general arrangements. In all this there is nothing of a showy nature. There is no great central commissariat yard, where we can see the materials of future warfare. Bread cannot be stocked like cannon-balls for future use, and the days of biscuit and salt junk, upon which were fought many of our famous battles—Inkerman, to wit, among modern instances—are over for ever. But Crimean men may remember the commissariat yard of those days, with its barricades of salt-meat barrels surrounding a collection of crazy-looking huts, with its great stacks of fuel, and its paths knee-deep in mud.

Thus, although "provisions, forage, fuel," etc., occupy a commanding position in the estimates, there is nothing to bring into evidence as to the preparations going on for their supply. At Cairo, now, or at Suakin, there might be some interest about commissariat stores; but here, in London—or, for the matter of that, at any of our military centres—there is nothing to be seen out of the way. But when the subject of clothing is mentioned, that is another thing altogether. The Guards, whom we have just seen embark, have been suddenly transformed from their familiar trim of scarlet and bearskin, and equipped with cork helmets, pugarees, khaki suits, and all the requisites for a tropical clime. Now, how is this done, and where? may be well asked by an inquisitive looker-on. And the grizzled sergeant is still at hand—he is waiting about these steps, it seems, for a Chelsea boat—is still at hand to reply: "Why, at the Army Clothing Factory at Pimlico."

The great cluster of buildings known as the Army Clothing Factory, with its open frontage to the river, wears a solid, business-like appearance in character with its surroundings. There is the formality of the Government-office first to be encountered.

The civil servants are still at their luncheons, as they used to be in the consulship of the overworked Plancus, although, perhaps, the homely pewters no longer clank together as of old. But a surprise is in store for us when the official barriers are passed, and our guide leads the way along gloomy corridors and up echoing stone stairs, and opening a door, brings us upon a sight that is novel and striking in the extreme.

A great hall is lighted from above by a glass roof, and is filled with dusky sunshine, which gleams upon a busy, cheerful scene on the broad floor below. An army of young women, it seems, in every possible diversity of costume and colour, with patches of bright, new scarlet cloth giving out a cheerful glow. There are the click of hundreds of needles, the hum of hundreds of sewing-machines, the murmur of hundreds of voices. Something like eight hundred young women are clustered under that glass roof, working at those innumerable cross-tables, sewing, basting, stitching, and driving these nimble machines. Shadowy outlines of soldiers' apparel appear upon the work-tables. There is the braided jacket of a dashing hussar, which already seems to carry itself with a martial swagger; here a more sober artillery sergeant, with a father-of-a-family air about him, while the scarlet tunic with the yellow woollen cord is suggestive of Thomas Atkins himself, with his cane and Glengarry. There are galleries all round, and in these are carried on the preliminary processes. Here the patterns are marked, and here the layers of cloth are passed along the edge of a swiftly-revolving ribbon of steel that slices them into the exact shape required. At one machine, the sleeves of khaki jackets spring into existence, twenty or thirty at a time.

It need hardly be said that everything is in full swing, and the work goes on night and day, with no Sunday rest or other intermission. You can't make a man a soldier unless you have got a coat ready for him. "Bardolph, give the soldiers coats," cries Falstaff when he has enlisted his recruits; and "coat and conduct-money" was always given to the rough-and-ready levies of former days, of which the enlisting-shilling was probably a survival. But with all this full speed and full power there is still a necessity for private contracts, and there are plenty of manufacturers who are ready to supply large quantities of army clothing. India,

it must be noticed, is self-supporting in this respect. A great deal of the cloth and flannel required for the Indian service is contracted for and supplied through the Pimlico Factory, but all the work of making-up is done in Indian workshops.

At ordinary times, when there are only the ordinary little wars going on or in prospect, the factory is well occupied with the general clothing of the army; but it can also undertake the uniforms of the Fire Brigade and General Post Office. The normal estimate for army clothing amounts to nearly eight hundred thousand pounds, and what John Bull's tailor's bill will run up to now can only be guessed at. But an elaborate system of account enables the department to give the cost of every garment it turns out. Officers' clothing is the affair of the officers themselves and their private tailors, and the most expensive garment on the official list is the tunic of a sergeant-drummer in the Guards, which costs seven pounds eleven shillings and a penny, while the ordinary tunic of Private Thomas Atkins costs just twelve shillings. The Volunteers as yet provide their own clothing regimentally of private contractors, but a sample Volunteer's tunic in scarlet costs exactly seventeen shillings and sevenpence three-farthings. It is evident that, as the various garments are made in sizes, which cannot in all cases correspond exactly with the handiwork of nature, there still remains work for the regimental tailor in altering and fitting. The khaki suits, however, being loose, can be made to fit anybody.

Altogether, in different parts of the building, nearly two thousand women are at work on soldiers' clothing, and nearly all at piece-work, for which the ordinary yearly payments amount to about sixty thousand pounds. The majority of the young women are well dressed and prosperous looking, their work being done under good sanitary conditions and at fairly remunerative prices. Anyhow, there is plenty of animation about them; talk is not rigorously repressed—could not be in the nature of things—and the atmosphere of the place is distinctly cheerful. The designing and cutting are done by men, but most of the other operations come within the women's department. As the tailor's shears are replaced by machinery, so his goose has become mechanical, and works with iron arms, guided by women's hands, while its internal heat is kept up by jets of gas.

When we leave the hall we quit the presence of womankind, for the rest of the building is devoted to the male workers. Here are rooms filled with bales of cloth, fresh from the makers' looms, while, in another gallery, machines are measuring off the material piece by piece, recording the length of each, and also its weight. Other rooms are devoted to boots and shoes, which are made outside, and contracted for, but which are here inspected and stamped. Other rooms are filled with head-dresses of all kinds—helmets, forage-caps, pugarees, and the contrivances for keeping cool, which seem to us, just now shivering in the east winds, so needless. There is a big room devoted to buttons of all kinds, to gold lace and garniture generally. A handsome gas-engine drives the lighter machines in this part of the building, but there is abundant steam-power in the factory for all the heavy work, and the sewing-machines are arranged so as to work either by foot or by steam-power. The electric light, by the way, has been tried for fog and night-work, but has hardly proved successful. The arc-light casts too deep a shadow, and is too far away from the work.

In the basement are the packing-rooms, where everything squeezable is reduced to the smallest compass in powerful hydraulic presses, while great cases and bales are ready and waiting for the railway-vans which are to start them on their way to Suakin or Alexandria.

And so we leave the busy hum of the factory, where work is not likely to be slack for many a day to come, and pass out into the fresh, breezy atmosphere of the river-bank. There are plenty of military suggestions all about. Fatigue-parties are marching along, and corporals, with books under their arms, are passing to and fro. Close by is old Chelsea Hospital, and there are one or two pensioners sunning themselves in a sheltered nook, while the drum and fife band of the Military Asylum makes the welkin ring with martial music. The huge barracks of the Guards at Chelsea look rather empty, indeed, while little Mary Ann, with a shawl wrapped about her, toddles about the barrack-square, and asks everybody where dada is. And then a Scotch regiment comes marching along, its band plaintively enquiring, "Oh where and oh where is my Highland laddie gone?"

Altogether, we may not be a military nation, but we take very kindly to the work when we do begin.

## LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNN," ETC., ETC.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

HERE begins the saddest part of Phil Wickham's history. It is bad enough to be going down hill at the rate of thirty or forty miles an hour. It is still worse to be at the bottom of it, with neither inclination nor opportunity to remount its steep sides. No doubt Phil himself would have been very much surprised had anyone told him that he had reached about as low a level as it was possible for a man of his temperament to arrive at. But, nevertheless, the fact remained. Phil could never by any chance have developed into an unmitigated scoundrel, nor have run riot in the lower paths of vice and dissipation. None the less, the vigour, the integrity, the straightforwardness of the man's character were as completely sapped as though eaten by a canker-worm. His moral eyesight was blurred; that which seemed easiest and pleasantest to him he did with a will, and reckless of consequences.

Edie had let him go; Ellinor held him with Titanic grip with those white slender fingers of hers.

The idea of a journey to "New Zealand, Algiers, the Cape, or Timbuctoo," had been given up. Had Colonel Wickham taken the trouble to interrogate him a second time as to where he was going, what were his plans, what did he look forward to in life, Phil would have answered with three negatives:

"Nowhere. None. Nothing."

Colonel Wickham, however, did not take the trouble so to interrogate his nephew, for the simple reason that at that time, little by little, all his thoughts and anxieties were beginning to centre on himself and little Edie.

"Can it be true? What does it mean?" were the questions he was perpetually asking himself from the time he sat down in the morning to his solitary cup of coffee, till, at the end of the day, he stood looking his good-night to the green mound in Stanham churchyard.

Could it by any possibility be true that so glorious an Indian summer was to crown the wintry solitude of his years; that Edie, in her fresh girlish beauty, really loved him—the weary old man—so well that she had thrown over young, handsome Phil for his sake? It seemed

monstrous—incredible! And yet—and yet——

Thoughts such as these were pleasant, fascinating, bewildering. Yet somehow Colonel Wickham did not grow bright and cheerful under their influence; but, contrariwise, moody and ill at ease.

"You look as though you were the Registrar-General himself, Wickham, with the death-rate for ever in excess of your births," said Mr. Fairfax, as he twitted his old friend on his solemn looks. "Why you fret yourself in this way over Master Phil's doings is more than I can understand. Young men will be young men. Now if you had a daughter on your mind instead of a nephew I could forgive you pulling a long face. Sometimes I don't know whether I stand on my head or my heels!"

This little remark of the Squire's possibly owed its origin to an incident which had occurred that selfsame morning over the breakfast-table.

In scanning his letters the Squire had come upon a little item of news which he had thought might interest Edie, and had consequently read aloud. It concerned Ellinor Yorke, and detailed how that she had installed as her young lady companion a certain Miss Lucy Selwyn, an orphan in whom Mr. Wickham also had shown a great amount of interest, possibly on account of her having been at one time the affianced wife of his old friend, Rodney Thorne.

Ellinor—Phil—Lucy Selwyn! These three names in one sentence brought the hot blood in a rush to Edie's face. All in a moment the mystery of her anonymous letter seemed solved to her. L. S.—Lucy Selwyn, of course. "The one worthy of Phil's love"—Ellinor also, as a matter of course. Great Heavens, could it be possible?

The Squire did not give Edie much time to piece her thoughts together.

"Now, that's very sly of Master Phil," he said, nodding teasingly to his daughter across the table. "Why has he never mentioned this Miss Lucy Selwyn's name in his home letters? What right has he to take an interest in any young lady, save one—eh, Edie?"

Edie rallied in a moment, and stood on the defensive.

"Papa, how often am I to tell you," she exclaimed, "that Phil and I have nothing to do with each other now, and never to the end of our lives mean to be anything more than friends? Why

shouldn't he take an interest in this young lady; or a dozen other young ladies, if he is so disposed?"

"Well, my dear, if you don't object I don't see why anybody else should," answered the squire, still bent on teasing.

"How could anyone object? Who would have any right to object except the young lady's father or mother?" said Edie, becoming suddenly incoherent and "mixed" in her ideas. "And as she hasn't a father or mother, I'm sure it's very good of Phil to look after her. Why, if I were an orphan to-morrow, papa, I'm positive you'd be only too thankful to anybody who'd look after me and show me any kindness."

"My dear," answered the squire with a mock solemnity, "if you were an orphan it would be highly probable I shouldn't be in a condition to be thankful to anybody."

One of Edie's greatest annoyances just then was her father's stubborn refusal to credit her statement that "everything was at an end" between her and Phil. He would listen calmly to every word she had to say on the matter, and then with a little nod and a chuckle go serenely on his way, his face saying as plainly as though he had put it into so many words:

"Talk as you will, Pussy, it'll all come right between you two. Before you know where you are I shall have Master Phil back, and worrying my life out to be married next week. You are just a little bit of a puzzle to me; Miss Edie—a little outside my experience just now, but Phil I know to a 't,' and it doesn't need a Solon to prophesy what he'll be doing before another month is over our heads."

Edie's temper, it must be owned, was not very sweet just then. Her playfulness had resolved itself into petulance, and a certain nervous irritability was beginning to make itself unpleasantly apparent in her voice and manner. For two whole days after she had sent to Phil his letter of dismissal she had shut herself up in her own room, pleading a severe cold and headache as her excuse for so doing.

What she suffered during those two days no one was ever likely to know.

No doubt during those two days Edie asked and answered for herself much the same sort of questions which parted lovers all over the world asked and answered some centuries before the hero of Locksley Hall put them into musical verse, such as: "Shall I think of him as dead, and love him for the love he bore?" or, "Is it well

to wish thee happy?" and numerous other questions which she doubtless answered in her usual short, decisive fashion entirely to her own satisfaction, for as she closed her room-door behind her, and went downstairs to resume her place in the household economy, she said to herself:

"Thank Heaven, I can never have that sort of thing to go through again! Thank Heaven, I've got Phil out of my heart at last! I've heaps of kindness left for him, and ever so much goodwill, but of love not a shred."

And this fact she reiterated so often and so decisively throughout the twenty-four hours, that she ended at last with believing in it as firmly as she did—well, in the existence of evil, mismanagement, and misrule throughout the universe, and the general tiresomeness of all created things.

How she hated Stanham, and all people, houses, and things therein, in those days!

"If I could only get away somewhere—to the North Pole, Jericho, Jupiter, Saturn, the South Sea Islands, Australia, or the Milky Way, there might be some sense in living!" she said to herself, in the pauses of her jerky, intermittent thanksgiving for the death of her love for her old lover. "But here! Nothing but a turnip, a radish, or a cabbage could thrive under such conditions!"

Yet there was a good deal of local gaiety going on just then. Balls, hunt-breakfasts, meets, followed each other with brisk rapidity.

Edie's flushed, eager face was to be seen at them all.

"Everyone shall see I'm not breaking my heart for Phil," was the one refrain to her thoughts as she danced, talked, or rode her hardest and best. "Of course it's only old maids who have their hair parted on their foreheads and wear two-button gloves—like Evangeline Whitmarsh—who ever do break their hearts over the men. Girls at my age know there are always plenty to choose from, and heaps of time to make a choice in."

Edie threw herself very much upon Colonel Wickham just then.

For one thing, he never teased her with innuendo, or blunt, straightforward question, as her father did, nor looked unutterable things when she had answered and settled finally every question concerning Phil and herself, and mountains of other matters into the bargain.

For another, he was always a safe refuge from unwelcome suitors—Lord

Winterdowne, for example, and one or two others.

Mr. Fairfax invariably proved himself a thoroughly masculine and altogether inefficient chaperon. The thinnest and most transparent of subterfuges would at times distract him from his duty, and leave Edie at the mercy of any appreciative but unappreciated admirer.

With Colonel Wickham it was otherwise. He stuck to his post with a steadiness worthy of his military training. Not Lord Winterdowne nor a prince of the blood royal would have had a chance of saying ten words to Edie if once her eyes had said to him, "Keep that man off. I know he's going to bore me."

This fondness of Edie for his society added not a little to the old soldier's perplexities and self-questionings. Also it helped to pile up a little higher those phantom-like hopes and delusions which in moments of vigour he essayed to overturn.

"It's all an enigma from beginning to end," he used to say to himself sometimes, when Edie would canter across a ploughed field away from every other man and keep Coquette's nose level with his hunter's for the rest of the day. "I would ask her right out what it means only it might scare her away from me as a veritable old coxcomb. She may be following just a little impulse, nothing more, and really have no settled plan in her head at all. Better wait awhile."

There was more than a grain of truth in Colonel Wickham's surmises. Settled plans of any sort Edie had none. Now one impulse carried the day, anon another. On Monday she would wake up and say to herself, "I'll make Colonel Wickham marry me—that's what I'll do. I told Phil someone else had stepped into his place. Very well; that someone else shall be his uncle. Phil will feel free as air then."

Before the end of the week she would be safe enough to say: "Oh dear, I can never marry any man at all. I hate men—old, young, or middle-aged. I couldn't—I couldn't marry Colonel Wickham; no, nor Lord Winterdowne. I'll just make up my mind to die an old maid—a disagreeable, miserable old maid—and they shall bury me in a Quakers' burial-ground when I die, and put S. S. (single sister) on my tombstone."

Which vehement language, translated from Edie's vernacular into that of common life, meant that she was too honest-

hearted for the rôle of careless flirt she had elected to play.

#### CHAPTER XXXVIII

It took, however, a great deal of finessing and some good hard campaigning to keep Lord Winterdowne "well at a distance" as Edie, with her new-born resolve strong upon her, had made up her mind that she would. Eventually the whole plan of defensive warfare collapsed through leaving a weak point unguarded—namely, her morning walks.

It was comparatively easy enough for Edie invariably to shut herself in her own room when Lord Winterdowne was announced at unconventional hours; it was easy also to tie Colonel Wickham down to endless games of bezique with her in small social gatherings, or in large assemblies to keep him perpetually on guard at her elbow. The morning hours were the difficulty, and when the hounds were not out, and Edie felt inclined to pay sundry calls upon her poor pensioners, it was always with a quaking heart and many a furtive far-reaching glance she went along, in case the dim distance might disclose the tall, stately figure of the enamoured peer.

Edie off and on was doing a good deal of cottage-visiting just then—in spasmodic, wildly energetic fashion, it is true, as was her manner, at that period, of performing all her duties. She was god-mother to every baby that was born about this time, supplied presents and feasts of all sorts and kinds—marriage, funeral, christening, or birthday, and generally showered benefactions upon her protégés in a fine lavish style.

Even good Mrs. Rumsey remonstrated with her.

"If you would only consult with me, my dear," she said, clearing her throat and speaking with a maternal air of solicitude, "and allow your bounty to flow through the proper channels, it would be more beneficial, I think, to all parties."

Of course Edie paid no more heed to her than if she had been one of the wooden figures out of a Noah's-ark. And when the Squire arched his brows and gave a low whistle over the long list of benefactions, for which she declared she was literally out of pocket, all she said in reply was:

"Well, papa, the truth of it is, my poor people have been shamefully—yes, shamefully neglected for a long time past, and I mean in the future that they shall want

for nothing. I'm turning over a new leaf—that's all."

This turning over a new leaf involved numerous brisk morning walks through the woodland and up the hill which divided the Hall from Stanham village. Edie, as a rule, had her maid in attendance during these walks, and on the only occasion on which she departed from this rule she had cause to regret it.

It was a windy, dust-driving morning, and Janet had had a severe cold with which hot drinks and bright fires sympathised better than wind and dust. So Edie set forth alone—save for a spaniel, a poodle, and a turnspit, who had volunteered as escort.

She had no sooner got through the woodland and begun to climb the hill than her quick eyes detected the outline of Lord Winterdowne, mounted and coming along with a stiff automatic precision, he and his horse—a somewhat hard, gaunt-looking animal—making all sorts of woodeny angles against the wintry, leaden sky as they came down the slope towards her. She saw his gold eye-glasses go up, and her heart went down proportionately. Escape was an impossibility.

"Now, surely," she thought with a prophetic terror, "he won't be so ridiculous as to get off that long-legged animal and walk back with me into the village. Dear me, how absurd it is that girls can't ride without habits! I could so easily get up as he gets down, tell him I'm tired, and canter home again. Heigho, how stupidly things turn out always! If you hate a man he loves you, if you love him he hates you. There's one comfort, one can cure oneself of loving. Oh yes, that's easy enough—I've done it already. But I don't mean to cure myself of hating. I'll hate any man I like, and as long as I like. Fancy me ever thinking the least bit in the world that I could marry this man! Oh, what a little fool you always are, Edie! Here he comes; yes, down he gets—I knew he would. Oh, he must have a stiff leg. Did ever a man get out of the saddle with such a jerk and a twist! I'm sure Stanham church-steeple would have done it better!"

Then loudly and very primly:

"How do you do, Lord Winterdowne? I'm in the greatest hurry; I've no end of things to do in the village this morning."

But Lord Winterdowne was not to be so easily put on one side. He had given his horse to his groom, and thus free from

encumbrance had resolved to be in attendance on Miss Edie, put the important question, and decide once and for ever his fate.

"Can I be of any service?" he asked in his usual slow, dignified fashion. "I have an unoccupied morning before me. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to be of some slight service to you."

"How delightful! An unoccupied morning! Keep it unoccupied and enjoy it, I should advise," answered Edie, talking very fast, and meantime devising her own means of escape. "I detest occupation. I can't imagine anything more delicious than having nothing to do, and doing it! Thanks, no; you can't be of any use to me."

Lord Winterdowne looked a little bewildered.

"I thought you enjoyed occupation; I beg your pardon if I'm making a mistake; but it certainly seemed to me—a—that you were rather fond of having a great deal on your hands."

"Ah, that shows how little you know my tastes. My idea of heaven is a big beautiful place, where it's too hot to do anything but lie down on cushions and sofas, and fan oneself with big palm-leaves. Now an Indian verandah in the dark of a broiling day, with a big punkah going overhead, a heap of blackbeetles crawling over one's feet, the air full of wings—stings—things, I mean, would be my idea of perfect happiness on earth."

She paused from sheer want of breath. The hill, the east wind, the dust, and her own torrent of words made her flag somewhat in her pace also.

Lord Winterdowne, still looking utterly bewildered, made snaps and snatches at her meaning, much as little Bimbi, the poodle, who followed at her heels, was wont in the lazy summer afternoons to snap and snatch at the big blue-bottles that buzzed about his fluffy ears, and with about as much success.

"Do you like hot climates?" he asked blandly. "I revel in them, I hope to be back in Florence some time this year—you know I bought a house there a little while ago. I had some thoughts of selling it; but if I thought——"

"Florence!" interrupted Edie in hot haste, for she did not like this sudden turn in the talk. "Oh, what a dreadful place it must be to live in! Pray sell the house, or give it away, or pay someone to live in it for you. Whoever would live in

Florence if they could help it! The mere name always conjures up ideas of priests, and poets, and palaces, and — and — and pictures. Yes, pictures I mean. Now, if there's anything in the world I hate, it's pictures. They always remind one of tired feet, and head aching and eyes straining over endless catalogues. Oh, how I detest catalogues, indexes, tables of contents, lists of anything! Ugh! It makes one shudder to think of the poor creatures who have to earn their bread by such odious work as catalogue-making."

Lord Winterdowne's expressionless features as nearly as possible revealed a mood of discontent and uneasiness.

"There are some people — a — who, without having to earn their bread by it, consider catalogue-making a somewhat — a — interesting pursuit."

"What ridiculous persons they must be!" interjected Edie briskly.

"But, nevertheless, it is possible it might be a pursuit they might be willing to relinquish — a — under certain conditions — a — that is, if they were asked to do so."

He was stammering hard now in his endeavour to make the talk close and personal.

"Oh, what an intolerably ridiculous thing to do! What utterly absurd people they must be! Fancy giving up anything you were fond of because someone else wanted you to! Why, it would make me stick to my sins harder than ever if I thought anybody else disliked them. Here we are in the village street. I'll say good-bye now, Lord Winterdowne. I'm sure you can't be going my road any farther this morning."

Edie paused, and held out her seal-gauntleted hand. But Lord Winterdowne did not extend his dog-skinned palm in response.

"I have farther to go through the village, if you'll allow me, Miss Fairfax — a — where did you say you were going to branch off?" he queried, showing an amount of "backbone" Edie, in her most charitable moments, would not have given him credit for.

She racked her brains to think of a place utterly and hopelessly out of his orbit.

"First, I'm going to Gudgeon's, the chimney-sweep's. They've six small, smeary children, every one of them unwashed, uncombed, and clamorous. I shall possibly remain there the entire morning; I've a good deal to say to each

in turn, and to the father and mother afterwards."

Lord Winterdowne must have been very much in love, for he suddenly grew inventive in his eager haste to follow Edie's footsteps.

"That's just exactly where I was thinking of calling this morning," he said, growing deeply red about his eyebrows. "My study chimney has smoked incessantly all through the week——"

"Smoked! Surely your study has a closed grate!" ejaculated Edie, and for the life of her she could not repress a gleam of merriment in her eyes.

"Ah yes, I made a mistake. I meant the housekeeper's room," he said a little confusedly.

"Oh, pray look well after the housekeeper! I'm sure she's invaluable! Then I'll say good-bye at once, for it has just occurred to me that the Gudgeons can wait for another day or two, as I particularly want to see Mrs. Rumsey this morning."

"Miss Fairfax, will you allow me? Will you have any objection to my walking with you to the vicarage?"

It was said earnestly, yet diffidently.

Edie felt as one might feel who, having gone a long way out of his road to warn a person off a muddy ditch, sees that person turn round and voluntarily immerse himself in it.

She grew hot and cold by turns.

"Oh, what objection can I have?" she said with a little nervous laugh. But in her heart she also said: "Very good, Lord Winterdowne, you are quite sure you've carried the day now, aren't you? But wait a bit. If you contrive to say ten consecutive sentences to me before I get inside Mrs. Rumsey's door—well, I'll marry you, that's all!"

They were standing now at the edge of the churchyard. Edie measured the distance to the vicarage door with the exact eye of a military engineer planning his length of line against the store of material he has at command.

There was about a hundred yards of the small churchyard to be gone over, about the same length of the vicarage-park, and well—say half that length of vicarage flower-garden. Yes, she could do it. But she would let him open fire first, so as not to waste her own powder and shot in any futile efforts.

Lord Winterdowne also had arranged his plan of campaign (in fact, it had been arranged for many a long day past, though

he had lacked opportunity to put it into execution); he took advantage of this pause in the conversation to fire his first shot.

"You will be surprised to hear," he began sedately as he swung back the churchyard-gate for her to pass through, "that I have lately varied my scientific reading somewhat, that I have introduced an element—ah, of—of ideality into it—ah, that is to say, I have been reading a little poetry."

"Here it comes," thought Edie; "poetry is bound to lead up to love-making, somehow." Aloud she said: "Poetry! How anybody can read poetry passes my conception; I detest the very name of it. It always makes one think of moons and spoons, and ba—s and stars, and colds in the head, and going to bed, and—and——"

"Oh, but the poem I——"

Edie went on recklessly:

"Now that's why I adore the dear old Rumseys so. There's nothing poetic about either of them. Did you hear the joke the vicar made to papa the other day about our salads? You know Mrs. Rumsey prides herself very much on her early salads—they cut their first lettuces a good fortnight before we get ours—well, he and papa met on the doorstep——"

But here Lord Winterdowne made a vigorous effort to get in a few words. Possibly he had mentally measured the shortness of the road to the vicarage against the capacity of the worthy vicar for jokes. Once let Edie get upon this subject, it must last her right up to the front door.

"Pardon my interrupting," he began hesitatingly, "but I had really something special to say."

"Oh, you really must hear this joke; it is much too good to be lost. As I said, they were standing together on the doorstep——"

"But, Miss Fairfax——" And here Lord Winterdowne absolutely stopped in the middle of the path, and laid his hand on Edie's arm, a proceeding which made Bimbi, the poodle, think an assault was meditated, and excited his protective instincts to such an extent that he jumped a good two feet from the ground, and caught the cuff of Lord Winterdowne's coat in his sharp, ferret-like teeth.

Edie grew frantic.

"Oh, Lord Winterdowne! Down, down, down, Bimbi!" she cried, careless whether she addressed the poodle or the peer. "How could you be so tiresome?"

I declare you've put my joke quite out of my head now. Be off, Bimbi—be off! See how wild you've made him! I shall have Mr. Rumsey indicting me for bringing my dogs through the churchyard if you make them behave like this."

She went along at a tremendously rapid pace ahead of him. He followed desperately. They were at the farther gate of the churchyard by this time. Only that little bit of vicarage park and garden remained to be got over now.

"I am very sorry I disturbed your dog's temper; I had no idea he was of such a lively turn of mind. All I was going to say was that I thought you must like these poems I have been reading lately. I made a point of getting the book one day after I had seen it on your drawing-room table——"

"Good gracious!" ejaculated Edie, heedless of logic and thinking only of emphasis. "You see candles on my drawing-room table occasionally, but that does not make you think they're good to eat!"

"Ah no! Pardon me. I don't quite see the force of the comparison. But this book of poems you must remember. It was entitled Songs and Sonnets, by the late G. W. It had a striking motto on the title-page—it was to that I wished to direct your attention."

Now Edie remembered the book perfectly; she also had a vivid recollection of the short and not too original motto on the title-page, "What is life without love?" Lord Winterdowne, casually opening the book on Edie's table, had been so struck with it he had forthwith bought the book and learnt the sentence by heart, thinking what a splendid prelude it would make to a love-proposal from him to the lady of his heart.

Not a bit of it. The word "motto" sent Edie up like a sky-rocket.

"Motto! Whoever reads mottoes? The horrible things! They make one think of crackers, and Christmas-trees, and—and Punch and Judys, and—and—Guy Fawkeses, and—and fireworks; and make one feel sticky, and smeary, and plum-puddingish——"

"Not such a motto as this, I think: 'What is——'"

"'What is to be, will be,' I suppose," laughed Edie, going ahead now at an altogether express speed. "A very sensible motto indeed. I think I shall put it down in my will and have it put on my tombstone when I die. No; after all, I think I'll have



'What won't be, won't be;' it has a far grander sound, and—and teaches—oh!—such a lot of wonderful things."

Thank Heaven they are out of the park now; fifty yards more and then a door-bell!

This idea flashed simultaneously through Lord Winterdowne's brain. It must be now or never.

He sighed.

"Do let me speak. 'What is life——'"

"Do you really want to know? What a singular thing! I'll do my best to tell you, Lord Winterdowne. It's a great big tangly spider's web, with nothing to catch and nobody to catch anything——"

"Oh, Miss Fairfax!" and once more he essayed to lay his hand upon her arm.

But Edie was too quick for him.

"A jumble—a maze without any middle to it," she went on, speaking more and more rapidly (for this shall last right up to the doorstep, she had said in her heart). "A conundrum without any answer to it, a—a—game at hide-and-seek with nothing to hide and nothing to find! A great, wild, whirligig sort of dance where everybody goes round and round, and twists and twirls, without any rhyme and reason. Ah, thank goodness the door-bell!" this was added sotto voce, as she frantically seized the brass knob, and commenced ringing vigorously.

Lord Winterdowne's face grew very long. He managed to secure Edie's unoccupied hand and held it tightly.

"You wouldn't let me speak to-day," he began diffidently, "but perhaps another time——"

Edie's manner grew suddenly dignified, generous, courteous (though she still continued vigorously pulling the door-bell).

"No, Lord Winterdowne, I would not allow you to speak to-day, nor will I allow you to speak any other day, for the simple reason that it would be utterly useless. Please understand me."

But evidently he found some little difficulty in understanding her. For he stood as one transfixed; his eye-glasses dropped off the high bridge of his nose

(Edie for the first time in her life had the colour of his eyes revealed to her); and he still held the small gloved hand in his own, firmly clutching it as though he had a right so to hold it.

There came the sound of footsteps and of door-opening from within.

Edie felt herself in a ridiculous position. Her hand was small, the seal gauntlet large and roomy. By a deft twist of wrist and fingers she contrived to slip her hand out of it, leaving the vacant glove in Lord Winterdowne's hand.

"Good-bye," she said cheerily, as the open door revealed the full length of the servant. "Call in and see papa as you go back, and tell him where I am, please."

Then she disappeared after the maid.

Edie never had her glove returned to her. Possibly wrapped up, labelled, and carefully sealed, it was put away among sundry of the choicest of Lord Winterdowne's treasures—viz., the first catalogue ever published by the British Museum, the earliest extant list of petty officers of Her Majesty's Household, or such-like interesting curiosities.

Mr. and Mrs. Rumsey were just getting up from their lunch when Edie's vigorous bell-pulling made them get up a little faster, and the next moment she rushed in, fresh, radiant, brilliant, from her hurried walk through the east wind and dust.

And she talked and laughed so incessantly, and with such an excess of gaiety, the whole of that afternoon, that, as she drove off home in the little pony-carriage which her father had sent for her, the vicar shook his head, and said to his wife gravely:

"My dear, unless I am very much mistaken, our little Edie is on the verge of a long and serious illness."

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### CHAPTER V. THE LIFTED MASK.

HE raised that fair, slender hand to his lips with a cold, passionless kindness, in striking contrast to her own fervour and agitation.

A stranger, stopping to caress some little tearful waif in the streets, would have showed as much feeling. Not that Bernarda was in tears. The mood to which he had brought her was of protest rather than yielding. She did not, perhaps, conceal that she loved him still, but another passion dominated her just then. Her whole nature rose up in revolt against that dark career, those tortuous ways, those creeds to be writ with human blood, in which he gloried.

Both were silent for a brief space. A certain lazy mood seemed to possess him. The Sabbath stillness of that retired street, the pleasant, subdued cheerfulness of her little room, the unwonted enjoyment of a personal talk—all these considerations made him evidently disinclined to approach dreadful themes. He wanted to talk, quietly, practically, and unemotionally, about the future, in so far as it immediately concerned Bernarda and himself. As she now glanced at him, stemming the tide of passionate words for a while, hearkening for what he should say next, it struck her painfully what a noble creature this Edgeworth might be, but for the ugly way in which he chose to transform himself. Where would one find a manlier presence, a better favoured physiognomy, a more kindling smile, a sweeter voice? And there

had never been any shifting or meanness about him. Looking back calmly on the past, Bernarda hardly blamed his conduct towards herself now. Without prospects, without a calling, unsettled of purpose, a poor dependent of the rich house in which she lived a governess, he had won her girlish love and had induced her to fly secretly with him, as they hoped, to find an El Dorado in the Far West. When, on the eve of their marriage, he allowed himself to be overruled by his kinsfolk and to start for the New World alone, she admitted that he acted under very strong pressure, and perhaps realised that he was persuaded into giving her up as much in her worldly interests as his own. The real grief to her had been those long, unexplained years of silence and neglect. She had released him from his word. Nothing was whispered of the future in that hurried, passionate leave-taking. Why had he never so much as given a sign of his existence until now? Therein lay the mystery that touched her most nearly. Yet, as she now scanned the face of her former lover, she failed to read anything there to disconcert her. His mind might be filled with fearful thoughts—he had thrown in his lot with that of desperate men—yet it was clear to her that, personally, he had not degraded himself. But for the deadly part he chose to play, which, however, the uninitiated would never suspect, no one's outward appearance could be more calculated to inspire trust and liking.

"You bid me not speak, Erna. But with what a look! I know all that is passing in your mind. Hear me out, then deny me justice if you can or dare! 'If you ever loved me,' you said just now—we will go back to that text presently. I want you not to think of Edgeworth, the individual personally known to you and mixed up

with your own past life. Bend your mind to a portrait in the abstract, an anonymous personage, type, if you will, that of the lover of justice, the patriot, the champion of our afflicted race."

She had removed her chair a little farther under the shadow of the window-curtain, and, with head bowed down and face averted, listened for what he should say. She was bound to hear him, and in silence. It had become plain to her that remonstrance was futile, words ineffectual as children's dams raised to keep back the tide. He was unreachable, unanswerable.

"You approve our ends—at least, I take it for granted that you have not so far forsworn your country," he began; "but you abhor our means. That I take to be your position. Do you, then, expect miracles in these days—angelic battalions, Heaven-sent, to smite the oppressor, plagues to strike terror into the minds of the multitude, horrible natural phenomena to bring all on their knees? No, my poor girl; you and I, and every man, woman, and child of our unhappy race, must at last recognise one fact: Deliverance can only come from ourselves. We have no hope but in the hate born of deadliest wrong, and the resistance engendered of despair. Union first, force afterwards; these are the only weapons that we can wield to any purpose. You do not pretend to deny it."

"But the snares laid in the dark, the fatal traps set so stealthily! It is a perpetual nightmare to me," cried Bernarda; "you are not at warfare with fiends, but human beings. Be merciful! Keep your hands from shedding blood."

He smiled grimly.

"Was the French Revolution merciful? Did not the innocent suffer for the guilty then? Understand me, Erna, I am a humane man, a lover of peace; the bare notion of shedding human blood is odious to me; yet were I called upon in this sacred, this awful cause, to connive at the destruction of an entire city—aye, were it London itself, I should say, not the vindictiveness of man, but the indignation of Heaven has spoken!"

Horror-stricken, fascinated, electrified by the fervour of his utterances, she looked up now, and saw that at last he was allowing passion to have its way. His voice gathered in volume and emphasis, his well-proportioned figure seemed to take larger dimensions, his dark eyes flashed fierce, scornful light.

"You shrink back appalled. I am at this moment loathsome to you; yet hear me out. We revolutionists, called upon to redress wrongs that outrage humanity, have no resource but so to unman ourselves. We must shut our hearts to pity, strip off the last vestige of weakness ere we are fit for our work. But there is self-abnegation here, and self-abnegation is ever a kind of nobleness! I have allowed myself to grow dark, desperate, reckless of consequences. Do I better my own case by so doing? Am I happier? Should I from choice, think you, league myself with midnight assassins and contrivers of wholesale murder—join the fellowship of desperadoes who would give me my death-stab to-morrow if I betrayed them? These necessities, I admit, are frightful, and, up to a certain point, demoralising; yet they have another side. Here is a man—I may aver so much of myself—naturally of humane instincts, sensitive as to right and wrong, fastidious in his dealings with others, whom injustice has turned, if not into a monster or a blackguard, at least into a desperado. Mark you, my good girl, I am conscious of the transformation, although I no longer rebel against it—you for one will believe that I have hearkened not to inclination but to sternest duty. Think how much I give up—all that men most prize—peaceful years, the respect of others, a stainless memory—and in exchange for what? Maybe exile, imprisonment, or something worse and better."

A strange expression, made up of scorn, exaltation, and defiance, caused Bernarda to turn tremblingly towards him, awaiting the climax in undefined dread and horror. It came like a thunder-clap. For a moment she felt awed, shamed out of personal feeling, drawn towards him by an impulse she could not explain.

"You must know what I mean. This name that I bear, so honourable hitherto, may, in my own person, be befouled by a felon's end. Yet"—here he spoke with overmastering passion—"do not think for a moment that the disgrace would be felt as such by me. Thus ignominiously to die for our people were, in my eyes, a holy martyrdom. You are no longer my countrywoman if you are not ready to share such glory—such shame!"

There was contagion in his enthusiasm—even sublimity in the storm of patriotic ardour to which he had surrendered himself. But although her feelings were

worked upon, she did not give way. His utterances lifted her out of the common, harmless world, not into his own. She was as far as ever from sympathising with his means, however she might approve his ends. He had, moreover, recalled those martyrdoms, as he designated them, of less ~~familiar~~ souls so familiar in these days. Ghastly visions ~~sifted~~ <sup>settled</sup> before her mind's eye of the sad process ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> issue at dawn from prison-walls—the condemned, shorn and shriven, supported by the priest, the automatic ministers of justice, the horrid paraphernalia, the brutality with which all ends. How much more pitiable the fate of these blind instruments and obscure tools than that of their haughty leaders! Her opinions were like Edgeworth's—immovable. Nothing he could say would alter her abhorrence of his theories; but the man himself, the conspirator, inspired a feeling akin to admiration. There came in a moment—no Heaven-sent inspiration, no illuminating flash of genius, swifter, less expected—a thought to guide her out of her dilemma, as far as her former lover was concerned. She had let him come to-day, and without having herself arrived at any decision. Every word he had spoken during the last half-hour but strengthened an instinctive conviction that this interview would be their last, and that she could not, because she dared not, ally herself with Edgeworth's destiny. But, on a sudden, and without any warning, she saw herself brought to the very conclusion that had lately seemed impossible. No middle way remained.

Friendship was possible with him—the easy intercourse of two exiles; two early friends; there were many ways in which, as an outsider, she might brighten his daily existence—perhaps, in some slight degree, influence and guide him. But only as his wife could she share those dark and stormy fortunes. Only as his wife could she hope to bend that iron purpose, save him, and, perhaps, how many others, from impending doom! Afterwards, when she had laid down for herself a definite line of action, and was able to account for every one of her motives in dealing with Edgeworth, she wondered at the promptitude with which she had answered him.

Light had flashed upon the dark path she was to follow, but it only made the darkness more inscrutable and portentous. An inner voice had spoken, not syren-sweet, but direful and foreboding.

"I am ready," she said, controlling her emotion, "not to share your guilt, Edgeworth—never ask that—~~only~~ <sup>will you</sup> make such a pact with me? Will you bind yourself to respect my convictions, as I will promise to respect yours?"

He rose, and standing before her, looked down into her face, smiling contentedly, perhaps a little ironically.

"Nay, Erna, I never asked you to share my guilt, as you put it. One life I have to lead, apart even from a wife. Then all is settled so far; so take this, and this."

So saying, he dropped once more a careless kiss on her forehead, and drawing from his purse a little gold ring, set with a shamrock in fine emeralds, with which were mingled a pearl or two—dewdrops, placed it on the fourth finger of her left hand.

"There is yet something I have to say," he said; "and when I have said it, suppose—suppose—" He wiped the sweat from his handsome brow, and leaned back in his armchair with a sense of relief. "I can never talk calmly of these matters," he said. "We will keep them in the background for the future—at least, from an argumentative point of view. No purpose is served by thus agitating ourselves, and talking in such high-pitched strain parches the throat—makes one thirsty."

He glanced archly at a little silver kettle on the buffet, and added:

"Suppose, my dear, you make me a cup of tea."

#### CHAPTER VI. ONE CONFIDENCE MORE.

BERNARDA lighted the spirit-lamp under her silver kettle, and, drawing out a tiny table, set out the tea-things. This prosaic yet graceful task was welcome after the excitement she had just gone through, and, seeing Edgeworth thus able to talk smoothly and unemotionally of their own affairs, she determined to betray no more feeling throughout the remainder of their interview. Collectedness should be met by collectedness, indifference by indifference.

"It pained you to think I had never cared for you, you said just now," he began, as, with his limbs spread out in an attitude of repose, his hands in his pockets, he contentedly watched her make the tea. "Well, I certainly never cared for you as you deserved, but I never became the

slave of any other woman, either. I am bound to tell you that. Not that a pretty face has never beguiled my fancy here and there. I am an adorer of your sex. Since our parting, I have fallen in love, as the saying goes, and"—here he laughed grimly—"been fallen in love with, but without any thought of marriage—on my word, without any thought of marriage. Why, then, you will ask, this silence, this apparent forgetfulness?"

He shook off his lazy mood, raised himself in his chair, and again became alert and emphatic.

"Why, indeed! My career is the best answer. What business had I, the rover, the conspirator, with a wife? For, hardly had I reached the other side of the Atlantic when I wildly took up those ideas which have since shaped my career. I purposely avoided correspondence with you. I said to myself, 'She will forget me; I shall forget her. Let it be.' You see, men in my case belong to their causes, their leaders, or instruments—not to themselves at all, and in those first reckless, exciting American years, marriage was out of the question. Things, however, altered. I inherited money, an estate, as you do not know. The course of events called me to Europe. The rest you know."

He now produced a little card, on which was printed:

"Bernarda Burke, Artist in Flower Embroidery, Holly House, Chelsea."

"At an exhibition held in New York two or three years ago, I came upon a little stand devoted to your handiwork, and the stall-keeper gave me this. I made up my mind then that, if ever my fortunes mended, I would ask you to forget and forgive, and marry me."

She made no reply. What reply, indeed, was there to make? Assent was evidently all he needed, and that she had given. The ring with its impearled shamrock glittered on her finger. The fragile china cup she now handed to him had a shamrock too.

"How pleasant to pledge each other in a cup of tea!" he said; "and you are a mistress in the art of making it, Erna. Come, now, every Sunday you will invite me at this hour, won't you—every Sunday till—you understand?"

"Would not a stroll out of doors be better on fine days? I could meet you in the park," Bernarda made reply. "Do not accuse me of inhospitality—I delight in receiving my friends—but your visits might be remarked."

"What if they are, since in a few weeks we shall be married? And do shut up your workroom, my dear girl. Why toil and moil any longer? I have enough and to spare for both of us."

"Shut up my workroom!" Bernarda cried, aghast. "Not till the very last moment, Edgeworth. You do not know what happy hours I spend here."

"As you please, of course. But those fine days you hinted at just now—will you guarantee them, balmy reminders of an Indian summer in November? No, my dear; a fireside talk is much more seductive, and these symbolic little cups make the thing very complete. I hope you keep them for true patriots like myself!"

"They would not often be called into requisition if I did," Bernarda said with a caustic smile. "And what would my habitual guests say if they knew who was drinking out of one at this very moment?"

He laughed frankly and heartily.

"Who are your habitual guests? Describe them categorically. It interests me," he said. "Then in turn I will tell you some of the adventures that have befallen me since we met last. We have plenty to talk about. By the way—"

Here he set down his tea-cup, rose, and bending down, examined the pansy so beautifully adorning her fichu of old Irish lace.

"Do you never change your flower? Is it because we pledged each other with a pansy—exchanged a flower because we had no money for rings on our betrothal day years ago?"

Bernarda was unready with her response, and, meantime, he coolly as before removed the blossom from its resting-place, and examined it minutely, holding it in various positions.

"Has it never struck you that there is a death's-head in this flower? Look at those dark spots as I hold it thus. Nothing was ever better defined. Throw the evil augury away, and wear my rose instead. 'Tis of happier omen than a death's-head."

"If it was so ordained that those who willed it might live for ever," Bernarda said again with one of her sarcastic smiles. She let him, however, unceremoniously replace the pansy by a magnificent Gloire de Dijon from the vase. Then he passed on to other topics, never reverting to his unanswered question.

"I have not said half that I had to say," he said, as he stood on the hearthrug, hat and stick in hand, ready to go. "There is

one thing." After a moment's hesitation, he added: "Let us have no delays. Let the thing be done at once. You know what I mean."

"Impossible!" she cried, aghast. "There is my work to think of—my apprentices. I must have time to find a successor, to finish all commissions, and put things in order."

"Surely a month would enable you to do all this?"

"Indeed, no," she said, still painfully eager. "My poor girls must not be thrown out of employment. I cannot leave my handiwork to be finished by others. It would be dishonourable thus to break my engagements."

He acquiesced at last with a bad grace.

"We will say three months hence then? You cannot say no to that proposition. I will make no further compromises. One word more. My life is, as you must know, exposed to daily hazards. Will you get two of your apprentices—not minors—to witness a deed for me. I want to leave the bulk of my property to you."

"Why should you do that?" she asked.

"Because I have no one else in the world to leave it to. There, you have the unvarnished truth."

"The intention is kind," she got out at last.

"My dear girl, we conspirators do not deal in intentions but in deeds. The document is already drawn up. I will bring it for signature and attestation to-morrow. Not to stay, not to hinder you," he added; "just to get the thing done and off my mind."

A friendly "Good-bye, then, till to-morrow," on both sides, and then they parted. No lingering look, no last fond-whispered word, no lover-like adieu.

Bernarda stood for some minutes lost in thought, and, knowing well that none could witness or record them, shed a few last proud tears.

#### JAPAN NEW LACQUERED.

IN Japan as well as here trade is depressed. Patriots have agreed to leave off "saké"; guilds have determined to give up expensive processions, incense-burning, firework displays, and so forth. Perhaps this is why the Japanese village came over. At any rate, the village being here, we naturally want to know all we can about the country to which it belongs.

In the old books we used to read of the two Emperors: the temporal, who lived at Yeddo (now called Tokio); the spiritual, who was enthroned in solemn but fainéant grandeur at Meaco (now Kioto). Nobody understood much about the working of this dual government; but everybody knew that Japan was closed, except to China. She had once been less exclusive, and Jesuit missionaries had made a great many converts; but, being suspected of political designs, they were turned out, and their disciples—those of them who would not recant—were thrown over a precipice into the sea. Since then, Japan had shut out the Western world. The Dutch, indeed, had a factory at Decima; but they were kept on a little island, none being allowed beyond it, save the deputation that brought its yearly present to Yeddo, and was made (so says report) to dance for the delectation of the Court. So complete was the isolation of this England of the Pacific, that gold, which finds its level almost as readily as water, was worth less in Japan than anywhere else. The Dutch trade was strictly limited; and the Chinese—who alone had anything like a free run in Japan—prefer silver for trading purposes. So gold had accumulated, and the native traders did not know its value. This was thirty years ago.

In 1854, American Commodore Perry took the Japanese Government by the throat, and said: "Your trade, or your life!" and thus got Yokohama, then a wretched little village, acknowledged as a treaty port. Next year, our Admiral made a similar treaty with "His Highness the Tycoon." But in Japan, we soon found treaties with "His Highness" were a mistake. De facto Emperor though he was, the Tycoon, or Shogun, was only Mayor of the Palace; he had no power to give us peace or war. True, his predecessors had been practically autocrats since, more than two centuries ago, Iyeyasu shut the Mikado up in Kioto, and turned him into a spiritual sovereign. But now the natives chose to remember that the Tycoons were, after all, usurpers. Probably the ill-feeling against them had long been brewing—one cannot tell. Certain it is the treaties with the foreigners gave the death-blow to this Tycoonship; and the great nobles (daimios), of whom he was the chief, and to whom he had given great privileges in return for their support, fell with him. Not at once, though; at first it was they who cried: "Down with



the Tycoon! Out with the foreigners! The sacred soil of old Japan shall not be polluted!" It was only when they found we would not go, and had had a taste of the thunder from our "black ships," that the Old Japan party executed a wonderful right-about-face, and went in for changes of which the Tycoon had never dreamed. Their notion was to learn all about our wonderful ways, and then to beat us with our own weapons. Some of them did not see it at first. There was the Prince of Chosiu, for instance, premier daimio after the Tycoon, who, when the Tycoon began coquetting with foreigners, threw off his allegiance, and brushed up his old forts, intending to make a stand against us single-handed. And he would have done it, but for two very young samurai (two-sworded retainers), so clever, that they were already high in his counsels. "Let us spy out these English in their home, and see what is the secret of their power," they said; and they pleaded so well that the Prince placed a thousand pounds with Jardine, Matheson, and Company to pay for their expenses. So Ito and Inouyé stole away—it was death for a Jap to leave his own country—and shipped at Shanghai as common sailors on board the *Pegasus*. Jack did not show them the best side of his character. That he should kick and hustle them for not doing what they had never learnt to do was natural; but finding they had fifty dollars, he started card playing in the fore-castle, giving the foreigners the alternative of being cuffed or of joining in the play. The poor fellows did not like to lose their money, so they held out till their heads ached and their backs were sore. At last they joined; but as it was "Heads I win, tails you lose," they were soon eased of all their dollars except three, which one of them had managed to secrete.

Inouyé, now prime minister of Japan, told the story to Mr. Lucy, the author of "East by West." What he felt most of all, however, was the conduct of a baker near the London Docks. As soon as the ship came in everyone else went off. The Japs seemed left to starve. Ah, but the three dollars! So Inouyé went ashore to search for food, and at last, despite the strangeness of the shops, his instinct told him that loaves were eatable. "But what does a big loaf cost? I'd better put down all the three dollars; the honest man will give me back the surplus." But no, the Christian baker rang one of the strange coins on his counter, and finding

it real silver, swept all three into the till, shook his head, and gave no change. Fortunately Jardine's messenger came next day. But the two soon found that the secret of England's power was not to be learned in a hasty visit; they heard, too, that their Prince, deprived of their wise counsels, was getting restless—he did soon after shut up against us his Straits of Shimonoseki, and got bombarded for his pains—so, feeling they were wanted at home, they applied for passage-money. But Jardine said: "No; the thousand pounds were to keep you in England, not to send you back." Whereupon they stole away as before, and shipped as able seamen in a sailing-vessel that took them the tremendous round by the Cape. However, they got back at last, and helped a great deal in bringing about this great and sudden change, to which the world's history can show no parallel.

It is, indeed, a great change. It not only affects the Court—it does affect that, for the Mikado, whom in old days no one even dared to look upon, gives garden-parties and dances—but almost the whole population. It was a Reformation and Suppression of the Monasteries as well as a Restoration. The old people, indeed, are as devout as ever. Hundreds of them spend their whole day in a temple, dropping "cash" into the alms-boxes, ringing the bell or striking the gong whereby the attention of the god or saint is called to each particular worshipper, and praying first at one shrine and then at another. Dutiful children allow their aged parents so much a week to spend in this way. On the other hand, Mr. Faulds, whose *Nine Years in Nipon* is as good in its way as Consul Mitford's delicious *Tales of Old Japan*, tells us how he lectured on Darwinism to a select audience, and felt that he was appreciated.

There is an ugly side, too, to the change. Thus an eye-witness tells me some lads bought a "life-preserving-charm" from a really pious priest, tied it to a dog, shot him dead, and then sent him to the priest, paper and all. It was "bad form," that dog business. But worse is the way in which many of the priests have stripped their temples of old lamps, priceless bronze incense-vases, wood-carving, sacred pictures—trptychs, made to fold over, just like those in use in the Roman Church—and even of holy books. One hears of a Jew carrying away a brig load of "curios" bought for a mere song, much of it temple furniture,

strangely like Roman Catholic church-fittings. We should say at once the Japs must have borrowed their ritual from Rome, as they did their writing characters from China, only this ritual is the same in China, and more or less wherever Buddhism prevails. Xavier and his missionaries, too, found it in use, and wondered that the devil had been permitted so closely to ape the ceremonies of Holy Church.

What has thrown the Jap priests off their balance is that Buddhism has been officially disestablished. It was the Tycoons' religion; all their patronage of sacred art was in connection with it. That was reason enough for the Mikado's counsellors to discountenance it. And, moreover, Shintoism is cheap; Buddhism, with its gorgeous ritual, its lamps, and incense, and burning of gilt-paper, its choirs and processions, is expensive; and Japan is very poor. "The Powers" forced it to make a cruelly one-sided treaty in 1858, and it is not likely to get rich till this is modified. Anyhow, Buddhism is looked on so coldly in high places, that even the wood-carvings (the finest in the world) at Nikko and elsewhere, are being allowed to moulder away, because they were wrought under "the upstart dynasty." Yet there is no persecution. Buddhism is not abolished, and you see the people swarming to the festivals, buying charms, and using prayer-wheels, just as in the old time. It is a corrupt Buddhism (Taoism, is the name it has in China), in which saints, turned into secondary gods, get a good deal of the worship due to Buddha alone. There is a God of Happiness, at whose feast you will see hundreds of full-grown men buying a thing like a toy-ship's mast, with flowers and streamers from the yardarms. They will hang that up in the place of honour at home, and will think it is going to bring them good luck during the year. It does not seem very reverent to spit pellets of chewed paper at your god; but the Jap does not mean any harm by it. If the paper sticks, he thinks he is in for something good, and from the part of the god's body that it adheres to, he argues what sort of good he is likely to have. It shows faith, too, to hang your sandals in front of "the two Heavenly Kings," hoping thereby to become a famous walker without the time and trouble of training. Do not think that the Japs only go to these festivals because they are a pack of grown children, and would go anywhere to see a few flags and

a procession. They are children, and no nation in the world spends so much in toys as they do. But in their worship there is plenty of desperate earnestness. You see a man, not only pulling the gong-string, but clapping his hands as well as wringing them; and close by, wrapt up in her own wants, a girl with gestures of the most piteous entreaty. Next you meet a woman who has come over a hundred miles to hang a lock of her hair on "the Gate of Heaven"; and who, having done it, is walking away with folded palms, and that look of rapt contentment on her face which only the best painters succeed in giving to martyrs. Shrines crop out in the most unlikely places. You are at a tea-house on a hill, taking tea and cakes, and talking to the neat-handed Phyllises, whose simple, artless ways are such a happy contrast to the airs and graces of the young ladies of the English bar. You look out and see a half-naked pilgrim resolutely climbing up the steepest side. He is not a beggar who has scented out the presence of strangers; for, a few minutes after, he is worshipping with frenzied zeal at a little altar that you had not noticed before, and when he has done he leaves a few "rin"—ten to the halfpenny—in front of the image. Maybe he is praying for a sick wife or child; perhaps he wants to be rid of the burden of sin, which comes of evil done in a previous state. I should stick to Buddhism if I were a Jap. It is fairly old, and it keeps its ritual. How can anyone, except a Government official, take pleasure in the official faith, whose high priest, in a blue frock-coat and white trousers, heads a procession of girls, dressed in plain white, differing from Sunday-school girls only in wearing wreaths of flowers! That is how the going back to Shintoism is carried out; and that surely cannot satisfy the æsthetic needs of the most art-loving people in the world.

At Nikko, the old Tycoons' burying-place, you see Japanese Buddhism at its noblest. Iyeyasu, the first Tycoon, was buried there some two hundred and fifty years ago, and since then the temple, which dates from the eighth century, has been beautified by each successive "temporal emperor." Its carvings are wonderful, and so are its avenues of Buddhas, and its weird figures of griffins and other fabulous beasts, and its solemn tombs, and its torii—the Jap trilithon, usually of wood, but here of granite twenty-seven feet high and seventeen wide, making us marvel how such a weighty impost could have been

set in its place. But the great thing about Nikko is its scenery. "Never say kekko (beautiful) till you have seen Nikko," is a proverb; and certainly the wood, and rock, and lake, and waterfall, and patches of greensward, must be a sight, especially when the cherry-blossom is out and the hillsides aflame with azaleas. The lanterns carved in stone are as curiously beautiful as anything. Curious, but not beautiful, is a big brass lamp, which was one of the Dutch presents. It was evidently once inside a Christian church; the reformers turned it out as "Popish," and Mynheer thought it would save his purse and be just as much in place with Buddha and the Two Heavenly Kings as it was before the altar of Our Lady. Many of the temples are being turned into schools; they will be the roomiest and best ventilated in the world, and one hopes the teaching will be up to the level of the place where it is given. At present there is a sad tendency to be superficial. You see Herbert Spencer on the one table which (with four chairs) makes the furniture of those who go in for English ways; but ten to one not half the pages are cut.

I wish there was not a still sadder tendency to wear English clothes. They never seem made for the wearer. I do not know how it is; a Japanese gentleman goes to a first-rate tailor, and yet his things always look as if he had picked them up second-hand. They fit, but with a difference. I suppose it is the way of wearing them. I much prefer the brawny boatman in his suit of tattoo and linen breeches, with a cloak of straw-thatch on a wet day, that makes him look like a little Welsh hayrick out for a jaunt, or the merry jin-rikisha man, who, outside the cities, wears as little as possible, to a Tokio "masher" in full dress, claw-hammer coat, white kid gloves, and a pair of pattens; or to the walking compromise, who, Europeanised above, has his nether limbs half concealed by a shirt and nothing more. It is well that the ladies have not taken to "improvers and swan-bill corsets. Their own dress is a deception. Mr. Faulds, who, as a doctor, has a right to know, says that the many silken bodices which they display—colour above colour, just half an inch of each appearing beyond the one below it—are not real. An inch of coloured silk is stitched on the edge of the bodice, another so as just to overlap that, and so on. To see what a noble looked like in his exaggerated crinoline, or a two-sworded

samurai (many of whom, poor fellows, had to come down to jin-rikisha driving when the old régime was suddenly broken up), you must go to the theatre. There, like an Athenian of old, the Jap sits all day long, and sees and hears the interminable story of wrong and revenge, and glory and suffering. It is like the Greek stage, too, in having a "chorus" to interpret the pantomime to which sometimes through a whole scene the actors confine themselves. You watch the "first villain's" hideous grimaces and grim contortions, and the writhings of the fair one, who, unless rescue comes, will be his victim, and "chorus," to the soft sound of the samiken (lute), tells you what is going on in both their minds. True, the Japanese chorus does not pace solemnly round the stage-altar as the Greek chorus did; it remains boxed up behind thick bamboo lattice-work; but the scene-shifting is quite Greek. Instead of all our worry with carpenters, a man who sits in the pit just turns a pivot when a change of scene is wanted. Greek, too, is the sex of the players. Woman, unhappily (as distinguished from lady), is not of much account in Japan; yet women never act. An enterprising company has lately brought on a ballet, more like an Indian nautch in its slow movements and sweeping trains than what we mean by the word; the public applaud rapturously, under the impression that they are seeing what hitherto no one but the naughty lords of the black ships have been privileged to look at.

If the European dress does not suit the Japs, surely some of our institutions suit them even less. One reads with horror that Japan supports two hundred and twenty-five newspapers, and that the next move is to be the doing away with what is left of Buddhism, and setting up a House of Lords. The Chinese are imitative, but in a conservative way; the Japs, if they don't take care, will find this giving up their own originality disastrous. It has already proved so in art. Even the trays at the Mikado's luncheon no longer ornamented in the beautiful native style which gave a new fillip to Western artists, but are actually in Brummagem style. You stop at a tea-house far out in the country, and expect, not only native fare, —including octopus soup—but native ware. You get the former; but, instead of the little lacquer trays, they give you coarse earthenware and hideous enamelled iron plates—German or English—and they

actually think they are honouring you by making the change. Japanese art, however, will take a good deal of spoiling. The people who can make a room look furnished with one flower in a pot and a pair of vases, and with whom flower-wreath-making is as regularly taught as needle-work, and whose toffee-sellers will model at a moment's notice any group, animal or human, that the little boy who is buying his halfpennyworth may fix upon, are born artists. One hopes that the Japanese art-instinct will be strong enough to live down this inroad of cheap and ugly things from abroad, even though some branches are of necessity given up—the swords, for instance, the forging of which used to be a religious ceremony, for which the smith attired himself in a peculiar garb.

Some of the changes are good. Cremation—said to be popular because it is cheap—we may mark as doubtful; and vegetarians will cry out against the increasing love of flesh-meat, which—as joints cannot be cooked in the tiny house-stoves—is provided in cook-shops. Certainly the light-houses are a boon around that mist-wrapped, typhoon-swept coast; and so is the humaner criminal code. Till the other day, torture was a thing of course among a people who yet will buy a caged bird in order to “perform the good work” of letting it free. Good is the rose furor, if it does not run to such extremes as the Dutch tulip mania. Before roses, rabbits were the rage, and the result was not always good. A man lost a pair of the most fashionable breed, and actually sold his daughter to replace them. The second pair died soon after, and then he committed Seppuku, vulgarly called Harikari, the proper form of suicide for one who has disgraced himself or brought discredit on his clan. Good is the steamer-building. The Japanese, says Sir Rutherford Alcock, built a steamer, without ever having seen one, wholly from the plans in a Dutch book, and much better it was than the rotten old things which English and Americans have too often persuaded them to buy. Distinctly bad is such women's work as the coal-shipping at Nagasaki. Good again is the change in underclothing—the use of woollen jerseys, and comforters, and blankets; aye, and beef-tea, and milk, and cod-liver oil, in a country where chest complaints are common. Infanticide is being stamped out, and so is smallpox; cholera is manageable, though it will never disappear till the open drains are done away with.

Few people are so merry, so contented, and so industrious. In the inland parts Mr. Coote (see his pleasant Wanderings South and East) now and then found it hard to get coolies. Once he offered a week's wages to have his goods carried one stage; but his “boy” told him “they no wantchee come; no wantchee pay; wantchee plant that paddy-rice.” They are over-taxed; our treaty-rules are very harsh, but the crushing taxation is not due to them alone. The Government has been acting as the Khedives did, wasting money on any folly that a spectator might recommend, and neglecting needful things. The Tokaido—grand high-road between Tokio and Kioto—is in a shameful state; thousands of the glorious cryptomerias (Japanese cedars) which used to line it have been cut down and sold, but not a penny has been spent on putting the road in order.

I was counting up the good and evil of this sudden change. Under which head will you class paraffin? It is accountable for a good many fires, though not for more than is the national brazier, which, put under the coverlet, is a dangerous bedfellow. It gets kicked over during sleep; the bedding takes fire; the bamboo house-poles, and the light shutters running in grooves that serve as walls, burn like matchwood; there is soon a great blaze; the statue of the fire-god is brought out, but has to be moved farther off; his godship will not stop the flames. And next morning the newspapers publish a map, with a broad patch of red, showing the extent of the conflagration. One would not like to lose the Japanese house, with its delightful surprises—what was a room suddenly becoming part of the street, and vice versa; but they will have to be modified before they will do for any sensible kind of stoves. In winter they are wretched; the whole nation gets frost-bitten; for, though they have their Gulf Stream, and so are spared the bitter cold of Shanghai, and though the volcanic soil (good for everything except sheep) counts for something in keeping up the heat, there is a great deal of cold weather, and singularly ineffectual ways of meeting it. The problem is how to get better warming appliances, and yet to keep clean. Dirt creeps in wherever window-glass and paraffin-lamps have got into use. Leather boots, too, have their advantages over the straw sandals which are taken off on entering a house, but the floors will be a good deal muddier when lace-ups and balmorals are

the ordinary wear. Anyhow, I hope that the Japanese dogs will still be free from hydrophobia (something very like it is said to come from the bite of white mice, much kept as pets by young Japs); and that some Japanese Sir John Lubbock will pass a Bill for preserving the national monuments. One would not, for instance, like that Daibutz—colossal Buddha, forty-four feet high and eighty-seven in girth, made of copper-plates, like the huge Liberty given by a Frenchman to the New Yorkers—to come to grief. The face, they say, is a marvel of serenity, and not Japanese but old Egyptian in type.\* If I had space we would talk of the Japanese racial affinities; and the Ainos, those "mean whites," who were in the land at first, and were driven over to Yesso; and the tailless-cats; and the children's mud-gardens, toy-trees to beautify which are "a regular trade;" and the jin-rikishas, which a lithe little Jap, all smiles and bone and muscle, wheels along from twenty-five to fifty miles a day, and has been known to take his "guest" seventy miles in the twelve hours; and the strip-sails of the junks, so convenient for taking in a reef or two; and the iris, planted on the thatch as houseleek is with us; and the Mikados who, springing from the gods, can trace an unbroken line to 660 B.C. I should really like to argue how the daimios came so readily to surrender their fiefs in exchange for small incomes in Government bonds. No other landholders in this world have ever been so complaisant. But I must end; and I end with one good trait of a people whom a recent visitor ungraciously describes as "suspicious, and unwilling to expand." They have very few paupers, just because the family-bond is still so strong. A Japanese labourer would think it a disgrace to send his grandfather or his wife's grandmother to the workhouse.

#### WHICH OF THEM?

A STORY IN SIX CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

"THE question is, my dear madam," said Mr. Picton very solemnly, "to which of the Messrs. Marston are you married?"

Lucy Marston sat bolt upright on her sofa, dropped her wet pocket-handkerchief, and opened her blue eyes as wide as the swollen state of their lids would permit.

\* Near this colossal bronze a priest is always watching for tourists. "Come," says he, "and I will show you a better Buddha." They go, and find a little image presiding over a table, on which is displayed a plentiful supply of bottled Bass.

"To which of them?" she exclaimed. "What a question!"

"Unfortunately, it is a necessary one," pursued the lawyer, "or I should not have troubled you at such a time. Mr. Alan Marston from Kensington, says that he was married to you the night before last, by your late uncle's bedside, and shortly before his lamented death."

"Does he, indeed?" remarked young Mrs. Marston, with a half smile, fingering her new ring, after the fashion of brides.

"Mr. Alan Marston from Brixton, says that he was selected by your uncle to be your husband, and that he received your hand from him."

"And what does Mr. Alan Marston from Yorkshire say?"

A gleam of demure fun shot across the tear-stains (tears for an uncle do not always leave deep furrows), but she waited with suppressed eagerness for the answer.

"He has not appeared to put forward any claim. He has not yet called at the house."

"That is strange!" said Lucy uneasily.

"Rather; but no doubt we shall soon see him. I apprised him of the decease of your and his uncle, by a note sent to Mr. Marston of Kensington's chambers, where, as you are aware, he has been staying since he came to London; but I learn that he went out early on Tuesday evening, and had not returned up to half-past ten this morning."

"Very strange!" repeated Lucy anxiously. "What can have happened to him?"

"A whim, probably—a walking expedition, or a couple of days' shooting," replied Mr. Picton, eyeing her sharply. "At any rate, there is scarcely likely to be a third claimant for your hand. The matter is quite sufficiently complicated already; but, of course, you can set it right with a word. So you must permit me to recall you to the original question. Which of the Messrs. Marston did you marry on Tuesday night?"

"It is quite impossible that it could have been——" Lucy was beginning eagerly, but Mr. Picton recalled her to the question.

"My dear young lady, never mind what was possible or impossible; keep to the fact. Which of them can you swear to be your wedded husband?"

"Swear!" echoed Lucy, aghast.

"Yes, swear, of your own certain knowledge. Whom did you marry?"

"I—I don't know!" faltered the bride.

"You don't know! Mrs. Marston, compose yourself. Think; you must know. It is no matter for childishness."

"I know whom I meant to marry."

"That is nothing to the point."

"And I know whom my uncle meant me to marry."

"That won't do."

"And—and they were not the same person."

"Not an infrequent occurrence, but adding to the present complication."

"But if you ask me who actually was there—the room was so dark, and poor uncle was moaning so, and I was so frightened, and I nearly fainted as soon as it was over; and if you told me I had been married to you, I couldn't contradict you. Oh, what is to become of me? I am rightly punished!" And she broke into a fit of sobbing.

Mr. Picton sat rubbing his chin until she was quiet again. He was nearly as well used to women's tears as a doctor, and as little liable to be discomposed by them; but he was a kind-hearted man, and extremely sorry for the girl round whom such an extraordinary tangle had woven itself. Still, he enjoyed the foretaste of the pleasure he proposed to himself in disentangling the complication, and unmasking at least one pretender.

"It is an awkward matter, at any rate," he said, "and it is rendered additionally serious by the nature of your uncle's will. Are you acquainted with it?"

"No," murmured Lucy.

"Following his directions, I opened it this morning, in order to communicate to his family his wishes respecting his funeral, and I read it in the presence of his two nephews. The gist of it is—that he leaves his entire property to you and your husband, Alan Marston, with provisions in case of issue or separation with which I need not now trouble you. The christian-name and surname of all the three cousins being the same, your marriage forms the only means of identifying your joint-heir. Mr. Alan Marston from Yorkshire has been absent during the critical period; each of the other two of that name claims to be your bridegroom, and you cannot decide between them. That is the situation. That you are married there can be no doubt. But to whom?"

"But," gasped Lucy, turning exceedingly pale, "if—if there should be any mistake, if it should be the wrong one, surely I can't be married when I never meant to!"

"Something may be done, no doubt, if we can prove fraud. There is fraud somewhere, it is evident, and the will affords

ample inducement. But the first question is whether the wrong man substituted himself for the right one, and is now legally your husband; or whether he is merely making a false claim, relying on the confusedness of the circumstances. It is a most unfortunate thing that I was out of town when your uncle sent for me to witness the marriage."

"But you will help me now!" cried Lucy, stretching out her hands. "You won't desert me? I don't understand anything—it is all so horrible—and I am all alone! Oh, what can I do? Oh, help me; don't let them come near me!"

"I will stand by you, my dear, never fear," said the old lawyer, taking one of her hands. "I'll take care of you, and never give you up except to the right man; and that is more than your poor uncle could make sure of, with all his precautions. Only you must give me your full confidence, and tell me everything that happened. The smallest circumstance may give us a clue."

"Oh, I will—I will; I will tell you everything. I dare say you will blame me, but oh, I did not know what to do."

And Lucy plunged into a somewhat confused narrative, full of explanations and back-stitchings, self-accusings, and self-exculpations, after the fashion of most young ladies whose education has not included the accomplishment of making an orderly statement of facts—and, in spite of the prevalence of the higher education, it is to be feared that they are still in the majority. Mr. Picton, however, seemed to extract a meaning from her story, which meaning he embodied in his note-book, and then rose to take leave.

"Do you think it will all come right in the end?" Lucy asked wistfully.

"I have no doubt it will all come right in the end," he replied cheerfully, "and you shall not be forced into anything against your will." But here Mr. Picton's conscience protested against his choking down inconvenient reminiscences of the English matrimonial law, and he was forced to compromise with it. "Only remember, there are more ways than one of things coming right, and don't commit yourself."

"More ways than one?"

"Why, it might—I hope it will not, but it might—prove that you were not married to the man of your choice; and then——"

"And then?" repeated Lucy anxiously.

"Then, as your cousins are all amiable and eligible young men ['Except one, who is a swindler,' remarked Mr. Picton's

conscience, aside], and as your uncle seems to have found so much difficulty in making up his mind between them that their merits may be supposed to be very fairly equal—why, perhaps, if it should be so, you might prefer accepting accomplished facts to making a fuss, and having your name in the newspapers.”

“Never—never—never!” cried the poor bride, the angry colour flashing into her cheeks. “They shall never have me.”

“They cannot, under any circumstances,” observed Mr. Picton. “But never mind. I don’t say it will be so—I hope it will not. Only, don’t commit yourself, or you may be sorry for it afterwards. Don’t tell anyone what you have told me.”

“Oh no! And, Mr. Picton, you will never breathe a word!”

“I!” answered the lawyer with fine scorn. The monosyllable was enough; Lucy was crushed. “My dear young lady,” he went on good-humouredly, “keep your secret yourself; it will take you all your time, as the Yankees say. Secret-keeping is no trouble to me; it is my business. And don’t see either of these gentlemen until I have seen you again. If they send you messages or notes, refer them to me.”

“Oh yes.”

“And keep up your spirits, so as to have a cheerful face for the right Alan Marston. Meantime, I’ll look after your interests.”

“You are very good, Mr. Picton,” she said tearfully.

“You know that money-matters are all right, in any case. You will want to get your mourning. You had better send for the dressmaker; that will amuse you, and she can send her bill to me. I’m executor.”

Mr. Picton went downstairs, applauding himself immensely on this last stroke. If anything could console a woman for a lost relative, and a husband of uncertain identity, it must surely be an heiress-ship and a lot of new dresses to realise it by. But, as he walked away from the house in Russell Square, his mind plunged into all the difficulties of the situation, and emerged from its dive with only one result: “The first thing is, to find out which of them married her.”

#### CHAPTER II.

ONE morning in the summer before the question set in the last chapter had twisted itself into its most complicated form of interrogation, Mr. Alan Marston, senior, merchant, of Gracechurch Street, City, and Woodlands, Surrey, was sitting in his study

at his country house, engaged in the difficult task of driving Dr. Billinger into a corner, and making him give a plain answer to a plain question. Dr. Billinger greatly disliked answering questions and giving information; he considered it unprofessional. It was for him to question a patient and give directions to the nurse; and the invalid being kept in meek ignorance of his own condition, died or lived “according to the will of Providence and the doctor,” equally uncritical of both. But Mr. Marston was not a man to be trifled with, and he got the upper hand of the learned physician.

“I know, doctor, that I’m not going to get over this, so we need have no humbug on that point.”

The old man spoke decisively, and nodded his peaked grey head; yet there was a gleam of eagerness in his eyes as he watched the doctor’s face.

“My dear sir, while there is life there is hope; and I trust at least to be able to relieve some of the more distressing symptoms. You must be sensible of a benefit from this last change of medicine!”

The gleam in Mr. Marston’s eyes went out. He had a firm hold on his lips, but there was a slight drop about his whole face. We never pass sentence of death upon ourselves so severely that the Amen of our fellow-creatures does not fall upon our soul as a too awful ratification. But few men let go their hope of life with less sign than did Alan Marston.

“I knew it. Of course I shall be glad to get off as easily as I can; but what I want to know now is how long I have before me?”

“The course of disease can seldom be predicted with accuracy, especially in the complaint from which you suffer. Many circumstances which cannot be foreseen may hasten or retard it.”

“Of course; but I want to know the shortest time you can give me. What can I depend on? I have a great deal to see to, and I must know how my time is going.”

“No doubt,” assented the doctor, “you must have much on your mind.”

“Well, I want to get it off it, then. There’s the business to be put in order, my niece to be married, my heir to be chosen, and preparations made for another world. How long have I to do it in?”

“May I congratulate Miss Scott? Who is the gentleman who is still more to be congratulated?”

“Well, you’d better not say anything to her about it just yet, or she might be

surprised. In fact, I haven't mentioned the matter to her; there's no use in exciting a girl's mind beforehand, and I haven't made up my own yet. But I have three nephews, sons of my three brothers, all my godsons, and all called after me; they're all well-brought-up, suitable young men, I hear, though I scarcely know them myself. I shall have them here, and take their measure; and the best of them shall marry Lucy, and have my property."

"He will be a very fortunate young man," said the doctor, inwardly wondering whether Miss Scott was likely to agree with her uncle as to which of them was the best, and what would happen if the best for her should not prove the best for the business.

"Of course. But all this takes time, and I want to know how much I have. Come, doctor, speak out for once! How long can you give me to do it in?"

"Well," said the doctor, beginning to yield, "I always consider it a most injudicious thing to fix dates. A medical man risks his credit on a prediction which may be falsified in one way by the most trivial accident, and in another by some latent toughness of constitution. On the other hand, such prophecies have a tendency to fulfil themselves by destroying in the patient the natural hopefulness which——"

"Confound you, man!" shouted Mr. Marston; "you want to be judge, chaplain, and executioner, all in one. Drop lecturing, will you, and tell me when I'm to be turned off, as well as you can. I'll not haunt you, if you make a mistake; only speak out and have done with it."

"Well, then," replied Dr. Billinger, driven to bay, and somewhat offended, "if you insist upon an answer, my opinion is that a fatal termination is not to be expected within four months, and may be delayed considerably beyond that time, but not probably beyond a year. That is all that I can tell you."

"That's all I want. Longest time, twelve months; shortest, four. One month to put my business in shape, another to choose my heir, another to marry Lucy in, and one to the good. The bill has a good while to run, doctor; but it comes due in the end, doesn't it?"

"There are days of grace, you know," smiled the doctor, taking up the metaphor.

"Days of grace!" said the old man wistfully. "To be sure, that reminds me. I must send for Mr. Spencer. I've a great deal to do in four months—a great deal to do."

"And so have I in four hours," replied the doctor, "so I will bid you good-bye. Shall I send Miss Scott to you?"

"Not yet, thank you; I'll ring for her presently. Good-morning."

Dr. Billinger departed, and Mr. Marston sat for a time alone, looking Death in the face. He was accustomed to look phantoms in the face; he had so looked ruin once, and it had turned aside and left him untouched. But Death will not be stared down; and Mr. Marston almost thought he could hear its unsteady footfall coming towards him along the vista of the weeks—hesitating now, and then hastening, and then again moving with regular steps—but always coming closer and closer, until the long shadow that lay before it should wrap him in its chilly gloom, and he should lie down to await the touch of the skeleton-hand. Never mind; he could not fight against it, he could not delay it; he could only make ready for it. The sense of business to be done roused him to do it. He wheeled round his chair to his writing-table, and wrote a letter.

"Woodlands, Surrey, May 20th, 1870.

"REV. SIR,—As I am informed by my physician that my present expectation of life is about four months, I desire to make preparations for the change which is before me. In this I shall be much obliged by your assistance. I shall be pleased to see you at my house at twelve o'clock, once a week, on any day convenient to you, and twice a week after I take to my bed. We lunch at one, when I hope you will join us. I enclose a cheque for ten pounds for the parish charities.—I remain, rev. sir, yours faithfully,

ALAN MARSTON.

"The Rev. Edward Spencer, Burton Vicarage."

The Rev. Edward Spencer was blessed with a sense of humour; and when he received this curious order for spiritual consolation, to be delivered as per invoice, cheque enclosed, he had to struggle hard for a composure befitting the occasion. However, he regained it, and duly performed his ministrations to Mr. Marston, with what result it is not for us to guess; but we may hope that the last and most important business of the merchant's life was transacted in as satisfactory a manner as the rest.

In the meantime, he wrote his letter, and when it was finished rang the bell, which was answered by Lucy Scott.

Mr. Marston's niece—or, rather, his wife's—the destined bride of a yet un-



selected heir, was certainly a girl whom it would be no hardship for any man to marry, with or without inheritance. When he and his wife found themselves growing elderly, with no hope of replacing the little daughter lost in infancy, they gladly took charge of the baby-girl suddenly left motherless by the death of Mrs. Marston's younger sister. The widower did not long survive, and little Lucy had never known any father or mother but Mr. and Mrs. Marston. They were too practical, however, to encourage fanciful relationship, and Mrs. Marston had a feeling that it would be dishonourable to supplant her dead sister in her motherhood; so the child always called them merely uncle and aunt, and had never used the dearer names, or realised the closer tie. They were thoroughly good to her; she was well cared for, well taught, well loved, only just without that little touch of special tenderness which says, "My own, my own!" and cannot be imitated by a stranger's voice. But as she had never known it, she did not miss it. She grew up healthy, pretty, good, and dutiful; and when her aunt died, five years before our story opens, she mourned her sincerely, comforted her uncle affectionately, and had ever since been the best of daughters to him, seeing after his comforts, obeying his every word, and caring tenderly for his fast-declining health. The gentle experiences of her little life had left no more traces upon her fair face than the passage of water-birds across a woodland pool; she had never known what it was to have a passionate feeling or an obstinate resolution. A well-educated, nicely-mannered young lady, with good principles, good looks, a handsome dowry, and no will of her own; what a prize for one of them!

"Lucy, I want you to write some letters for me."

"Yes, dear uncle."

"Sit down; I want to talk to you first."

Lucy dropped down on a stool at his feet.

"You know my three nephews—at least, the three of them who are called after me?"

"Of course I remember the Alana. They used to come here sometimes in the holidays when they were boys."

"Yes; but since your poor aunt died, I have not cared to be bothered with them. But now they are young men, and I mean to make one of them my heir. I've heard from the doctor that I can't live long."

"Oh, uncle!" Lucy took his hand carelessly, but she was evidently not startled.

"And I must arrange my affairs. I

have to provide for you, my dear, and for the business, and I mean to do both at the same time. I shall ask these young men down here for the partridge-shooting; I shall see how they have turned out, and the best of the three shall marry you, and succeed to the business and this place."

"Marry me! Oh, uncle—please not!"

"Nonsense, child; don't talk like a baby. You must be married; I can't leave you with no one to take care of you. I've done it as well as I could myself, so far, and now I must look out for a substitute."

Lucy burst into tears.

"Dear uncle, don't talk so; you have been the best, the kindest—I can't bear to think of it; but if I haven't you, I don't want anyone. Providence will take care of me."

"Providence——!" Mr. Marston stopped short. "That's a girl's way of talking. I don't believe in neglecting my business, and expecting Providence to look after it for me. At any rate, I'd rather see to it myself. You'll be sure to marry somehow, and if I don't get a good husband for you, you'll get a bad one for yourself; women are such fools about men. You've been the same as my daughter, and all I have shall go to you and your husband and your children. But you must be guided by me. Do you suppose I'd trust you to choose a warehouse clerk for me at thirty shillings a week?"

"No," murmured poor Lucy.

"Then is it likely that I would trust you to choose the man who is to manage my whole business, and keep up the credit of my name after I am dead and buried? One of my three nephews is sure to suit; I'll pick the best for you, and see you married. Don't talk any more nonsense, but write the letters."

"To my cousins?"

"No; better write to their fathers. Say that I am not well and can't write myself. Say something civil about my wishing to make their acquaintance, and so on, and ask them to come for the 1st of September, stay a month, and shoot my partridges."

"I wonder if they will all accept," said Lucy, beginning to recover her spirits. After all, one of them might be very nice; at any rate, the prospect of three possible lovers is exciting to the female mind.

"Of course they'll accept; a sickly old fellow with money to leave can issue his invitations, and they'll be treated like royal commands."

"And, oh, dear, how shall we distinguish them when they do come?"

"Why, child, they won't be all alike—like peas in a pod, because they have the same name."

"No; but what shall we call them? All Alans! We shall have to name them after their birthplaces, and to be sure they come from the opposite corners of England, for Brixton is as far from Kensington, morally, as it is from Yorkshire."

"I rather wonder what sort of fellows they have turned out. The Kensington boy used to be good-looking."

"Oh, he has grown up a very fine gentleman indeed. He inherited his mother's fortune, and owns half a moor in Scotland. He won't want your money, uncle."

"Wants it all the more, no doubt; extravagant young dog! Yes, John married a fool for her money, and little good he got of it. Serve him right!"

"Alan from Brixton is quite different. He is a clerk with Messrs. Timmins and Company, tea-merchants; very well spoken of by his employers, salary raised last year, spends his evenings at home, except when he goes to a debating society, or a lecture—a very steady young man indeed. That is your model nephew, uncle!"

"Bets on the quiet with his master's money, I dare say. I know the sort. And what of the Yorkshire Alan?"

"I don't know so much about him. Only that, as Uncle Henry is poor, and has a lot of children to keep on a small living, Alan is going out to Canada in the spring."

"Where did you get all this gossip?"

"Oh, Mrs. White"—Mrs. White was the housekeeper—"thinks it her duty to keep herself acquainted with family intelligence. I don't know how she finds it all out, but she does, and tells me when we are doing our stitching together."

"Well, let Mrs. White gossip to you as much as she likes, but don't you gossip to her, Lucy—especially about my intentions."

"Oh no; and, uncle—dear uncle, do please leave me out of them." Lucy rose to her feet, and kissed his forehead.

"Rubbish, child! You'll like to be married as well as other girls. Go and write your letters."

So Lucy departed, and wrote her letters—not without many flutterings of heart. She had always lived in such a state of subjection, that it really seemed to her almost as natural that her uncle should choose her husband as that he should have chosen her governess; and though in both cases she might have preferences, she never dreamt of rebelling.

The letters were written and sent.

One created a commotion round a Yorkshire breakfast-table, another fluttered a Brixton tea-party, while a third lay for a day unopened on a velvet-covered mantelpiece in Kensington; but all were ultimately received, read, and answered. Mr. Marston's predictions were fulfilled. All the invitations were accepted, and in due course of time all the guests arrived.

But when the 31st of August brought the three young men to Woodlands, although Mr. Marston had kept his own counsel, and Lucy could have sworn that she had not breathed a word, there was not a creature in the house, from its master to the errand-boy, that was not asking himself, herself, and everybody else—"Which of them?"

#### BY THE POOL.

SURELY he took the hard first prize

In suffering's bitter school,  
Who lay for eight-and-thirty years,  
By Bethesda's wonderful pool;  
Who watched for eight-and-thirty years  
Of desperate struggle and prayer,  
Till strife to dull quiescence sank,  
And hope died to despair.

So often the rush of the miracle,  
Proved Faith's best dreaming true;  
So often the merciful angel's wings  
Cleft down the Syrian blue,  
And swept the placid waters,  
Till they ruffled and flashed in light,  
And of all the halt and plague-struck there,  
Just one might prove its might.

And there was never a kindly grasp,  
To raise or succour him;  
Never a strong true hand to help,  
As he dragged him close to the brim;  
So very near to the healing wave,  
The crippled form had been,  
And always, just as he reached it,  
Had someone stepped between.

What throes of mortal anguish,  
What bitter helpless wail,  
What bursts of hard defiant wrath,  
Had known each effort fail!  
Ere conquered pain won patience,  
And quietly he said:  
"Sir, there is none to help me,"  
To the Lord of quick and dead.

So many lie in impotence  
Neath sorrow's heavy rod;  
So many wait, and watch, and pray,  
For the descending God.  
One day when hope has soared to faith,  
And the spirit owned its rule,  
The words "Rise up and walk" will come,  
As erst beside the pool.

#### CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

##### BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

IN Buckingham, without doubt, we have the home of the Buckings, or Beechings—of those who dwell among the beech-woods which are still a feature of the county. The

county thus takes its name from its chief stronghold, for, like Herts and Beds, its limits are those of an artificial division established for military and civil purposes, probably at the time of the consolidation of the various Saxon kingdoms under the rule of the royal line of the West Saxons. Before that time the county had formed part of the great central wilderness—uncleared and uncultivated, except in certain favoured valleys—which had, possibly enough, preserved in its limits some remains of the ancient population of the land. It would seem, indeed, as if here were an outlying colony of the great industrial stock that found a refuge among the northern hills. For here we have still the somewhat anomalous condition of an industrial people without any great industry to employ them; and driven for the want of something for their hands to do, to all kinds of trivial employment. Hence the “spinners and the knitters in the sun,” the straw-plait weavers, the lace-makers, and the chair-makers, whose vocation may have been originally suggested by the copious supply of beech-wood from the characteristic beech-groves of the county. It is surprising, too, how liberally the ranks of the smaller artificers who swarm in London streets, and especially in the north-western suburbs, are recruited from the county under notice.

There is nothing romantic or even very pleasing about the villages and smaller towns inhabited by this industrious people—long and straggling streets, with low, whitewashed cottages, thatched at their best, but often looking their meanest in modern blue slate. And such is Buckingham, pronounced to be the most uninteresting town in the kingdom. Placed in the extreme corner of the county, it may excite surprise that such a place should have ever been of importance enough for the seat of county government, which in later times has been practically removed to the more central Aylesbury. In truth, the importance of Buckingham was never more than that of a military post, fiercely contested often enough between Danes and Saxons. The Danes held the valley of the Ouse, with Buckingham as their chief post in the upper part of the valley, with Oxford and the Valley of the Thames within a day's march, and so practically with the power of severing east and west England.

But for all this what is there to show but the mound where the fort stood, looking over

the river Ouse that takes a bend about it? while the castle mound itself is occupied by a church of A.D. 1777, “on the plan of the Portland Chapel in London.” Once upon a time the town had an especial saint of its own, the object of local veneration, little St. Rumbold, the patron of babes and sucklings, who died when three days old; but who had crammed into that narrow strip of life sufficient goodness to entitle him to canonisation.

Deprived of the influence of their baby-saint by the Reformation, the people of Buckingham, and the county generally, became fiercely and strongly Puritan, and joined with the eastern counties in levying forces against King Charles. The landed gentry of the county, not overshadowed by any of the great nobility, went solidly for the Parliament. There was an irritating kind of irony in levying ship-money upon a county most of whose inhabitants had never seen a ship or the sea, and John Hampden, from the antiquity of his race, and his leading position among his fellows in the county, was well-fitted to become the champion of his class. According to tradition, the Hampdens had already distinguished themselves by opposition to royalty. An old county rhyme records

Tring, Wing, and Ivinghoe did go  
For striking the Black Prince a blow;

and the bold subject who thus suffered the loss of three of his manors to redeem his life, was one of the Hampdens of old who had the Black Prince for a neighbour at his palace and manor of Prince's Risborough. There are still remains near the church of the latter village of the mound which enclosed the palace of the Black Prince. But the memory of the Hampdens is now almost lost in the district where the family had so long resided as lords of the manor. The last of the Hampdens died in 1754 without male issue, and their lands have since passed through many different hands.

Connected with the Hampdens were the Wallers, a family of good estate, whose representative at the date of the civil wars was Edmund Waller, afterwards to be known as the poet. Poet, indeed, he is worthy to be called, but his life was rather that of the wealthy squire and man of pleasure than of the assiduous cultivator of the muses. Altogether his early associations are of Buckinghamshire; he was born at Coleshill, which Dr. Johnson says is in Hertfordshire—but the usually accurate lexicographer is wrong, the place is

genuine Buckinghamshire—and his school-days were spent at Eton, still within the limits of his county. Waller was chosen member for Amersham, in his native vale, before he was of full age, and then he went to the City for a wife, and carried off Mistress Ann Banks, a ward of the Court of Aldermen, who had eight thousand pounds in hard cash for her portion, and who was ardently desired by more than one of the gallants of the Court. Master Waller incurred the anger both of King and Lord Mayor, but contrived to make his peace with both, and to secure his bride's dower, a moderate fine being deducted for his audacity. The poet was then twenty-six years old, and soon was left a widower, with means and leisure to indulge in more poetic amours. Much of his time was now spent at Penhurst, where he laid siege to the heart of Lady Dorothea Sidney, eldest daughter of the Earl of Leicester, wooing her in many dulcet strains as his incomparable Sacharissa. The maid, however, preferred the glitter of a coronet to the amenities of literature, and married the Earl of Sunderland. Still the poet essayed to move the hearts of exalted demoisels, and Amoret, who is said to have been a certain Lady Sophia Murray took the place of Sacharissa.

In all this there was probably little serious meaning. Waller fell back on his rôle of Buckinghamshire squire without a positive heartbreak, and married a certain Miss Bresse, who had no poetic name, but who brought him a family of thirteen children. It was not about her girdle, we may assume, that he wrote some of his happiest lines :

A narrow compass, and yet there  
Dwelt all that's good and all that's fair.  
Give me but what this riband bound,  
Take all the rest the sun goes round.

But the temperament of the poet was sadly out of accord with the character of his surroundings. There was his uncle Hampden, a good man and true, but of a serious, religious cast, like the rest of the family. There were the Fairfaxes, people most estimable and distinguished, in one of whom, indeed—the translator of Tasso, whose book was to be found even in the libraries of the godly—Waller recognised his first poetic model. Naturally enough, when under the influence of his own people, he felt himself the stern, incorruptible patriot, the rigid republican. With equal facility, among the gay young rufflers of the Court, with whom his wit

and gaiety made him always welcome—so that Ned Waller's was the life of a carouse, although himself rigidly abstemious—our poet felt all the reckless abandon of those who studied not politics, but who were ever ready to draw their swords for their King or their mistress.

These were rough times for a man of such facile temperament, and thus we find, all of a sudden, the Parliament man, the nephew of Hampden, joining in some hairbrained conspiracy to raise an insurrection for the King, and deliver over the city into his hands. The stern sectaries who had the management of affairs soon had their grasp upon the conspirators, and the gay poet found himself almost in the hands of the executioner before he had realised the peril he was incurring. Waller quailed at the prospect of death, and that for a cause he had only dallied with, and for which in cold blood he had no great relish. And so he saved his life by a full confession, and saw his more determined associates led to the scaffold. Two of these—Challoner and Tomkins, the latter described as the poet's brother-in-law—were executed at the Holborn end of Fetter Lane—a spot henceforth, one would think, of terrible reproach to the infirm-minded poet.

But he soon shook off the trouble from his soul, and well mulct in a fine of ten thousand pounds, went to lead a gay extravagant life at Paris. The Puritan party must have regarded Waller as one of their own lambs gone astray, but to be dealt with tenderly; for presently Waller made his peace with Cromwell, and returned to what was left of his Buckinghamshire estates. The stern Protector had a certain tenderness for children, poets, and weak things in general, and could appreciate a well-turned verse. Waller seems to have felt a real regard for him, and his verses on Cromwell's death have an honest ring about them. And then our poet executes a demi-volte, and sings the blessings of the Restoration.

Charles, who was no bad critic, told the poet that these last verses were far inferior to the other; a thrust which Waller evaded rather meanly than wittily by declaring that a poet could deal better with fiction than with fact. But if, as is generally believed, it was by Waller's influence that Milton was left unmolested in the "white terror" of the reaction, the lesser poet's meanness may be excused.

Milton and Waller were near neighbours for a while in this same Buckinghamshire, when Milton, driven from London by the

Plague, finished his *Paradise Lost* in the homely cottage which is still shown to the pilgrim at Chalfont St. Giles. And that is within walking distance from Beaconsfield, where Waller had built himself a more dignified residence, known as Hall Barns. Milton's choice of a retreat was probably due to the neighbourhood being thickly peopled with families of his own way of thinking in politics and religion, among whom he would meet with the respect and reverence that were elsewhere denied him. But there would have been nothing in Milton's nature to estrange him from the bard of amorous pieces and love-songs, as he himself had written :

Whether the muse or love call thee his mate,  
Both them I serve, and of their train am I.

As for Waller, he died full of years at his own house in Beaconsfield, and was buried in the church there, and a monument is still there to his honour. His son Edmund, who inherited the estate, a good deal impaired by the father's long and somewhat wasteful life, presently turned Quaker, and then the Wallers sank decorously into obscurity.

The county, indeed, is rich in its associations with the poets. We have Gray at Stoke Pogis, with the churchyard, which, no doubt, suggested the elegy, and the spires and antique towers of Eton in the distance. Even more closely connected with the county is Cowper, who drew from its placid scenery and quiet county society some of his best inspiration. Who does not remember the description of the rural postman :

Hark, 'tis the twanging horn ! o'er yonder bridge,  
That with its wearisome but needful length,  
Bestrides the wintry flood ; in which the moon  
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright ;  
He comes the herald of a noisy world.

Now, this is Olney Bridge as it used to be in Cowper's time. The bridge has been renewed, but the other features of the scene are the same—a scene not at all joyous or inspiring, but that was the suitable medium for the poet to work in. A melancholy poet at the best of times was Cowper, whose morbid feelings were always quivering on the brink of insane confusion, so that perhaps, after all, his religious despair gave a kind of dignity to his hallucinations without doing much to cause them. Cowper lived at Olney for twenty years, in the old brick house in the market-place, dull and commonplace enough, behind which is the garden, where the poet's summer-house is still to be seen. Then for nine years

longer he sojourned close by—at Weston Underwood, near his friends, the Throckmortons. The companion of all these years was Mary Unwin, the widow of a clergyman, who, at Huntingdon, first took compassion on the shy, nervous, helpless man, and tended him with more than motherly care and affection till she herself became a helpless sufferer. Thus all the best part of Cowper's life was spent in quiet Buckinghamshire, and in the levels of the placid Ouse, and there he should have been left to die in peace ; but fussy, albeit well-intentioned relatives dragged the forlorn pair to the sandy barrens of the Norfolk coast, and there, in mental anguish aggravated by uncongenial surroundings, the last days of the poor poet smouldered away in gloom and despair.

But we must not forget that while Buckinghamshire at one end seems to belong to the great fen country, on the other side it is almost suburban, with the Thames washing its shores ; and the pleasant mansions of its magnates looking over the reaches of the river, as Fawley, familiar to the oarsmen of the Thames, overlooking the Henley regatta-course ; and Medmenham, with its pseudo ruins and mixed Rabelaisian associations. There is the pleasant town of Great Marlow, too, which seems to be practically annexed to the empire of London ; and lower down, with Hedsor looking down from its height, and the beautiful hanging woods of Oliveden, the river owes the most charming part of its scenery to the Buckinghamshire hills. Then there are Burnham Beeches, a tract of wild woodland, with weird and ancient beech-trees, the last relics, perhaps, of the once extensive forest which gave its name to the county. At some time or other the beeches of Burnham have been pollarded, to which they owed their gnarled and twisted appearance, which is not the usual character of the smooth, symmetrical tree, whose smooth white limbs, half seen among the foliage, suggest thoughts of nymphs bathing in green, translucent pools ; or haply some memories of the Saxon swineherd, with his herds of swine feeding upon the plentiful pannage, in the form of beech mast scattered thickly upon the sparse grass. Reminding, too, of old Evelyn and his sylvan lore, discoursing thus of the beech, with the customary touch of self-satisfied scholarship :

"The shade, unpropitious to corn and grass, but sweet, and of all the rest most refreshing to the weary shepherd 'lentus in

umbra,' echoing Amoryllis with his oaten pipe. The stagnate water in the hollow trees cures the most obstinate tetter, scabs, and scurf. The leaves chewed are wholesome for the gums and teeth, and the very buds, as they are in winter hardened and dried upon the twigs, made good tooth-pickers. Swine may be driven to mast about the end of August; but it is observed that when they feed on it before it be mature, it intoxicates them for a while. In the meantime the kernels of the mast are greedily devoured by squirrels, and above all by dormice. And what relief they give to thrushes, blackbirds, fieldfares, and other birds everybody knows."

On one of the small brooks that join the Coln, and eventually the Thames, lies Amerham in a pleasant wooded valley, and close by is Shardeloes, the ancient seat of the Drakes, a family distinguished in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for their strong attachment to the Puritan party in politics and religion. A little book, printed in 1647, called *Trodden Down Strength by the God of Strength*; or, *Mrs. Drake Revived*, gives incidentally a curious picture of the times. Poor Mrs. Drake fell into a melancholy despondency, to cure which her friends procured a succession of the ablest ministers of the day to argue with her and persuade her to better thoughts. But all in vain. Like Cowper, the poor woman was convinced that she was a castaway, and spent many years—sad and miserable to herself and others about her—in that uncomfortable conviction. In her last hours, however, she became convinced that her sins were forgiven; and for ten days and nights she had no sleep, and employed her whole time in talking on religious subjects—a succession of ministers coming and going about her couch—and singing psalms and hymns, and giving advice to her friends, children, and servants. Then she caused herself to be dressed in white like a bride, and so expired, and, at her own request, was buried in the same clothes.

Then there is High Wycombe close by, with Hughenden in its immediate neighbourhood, with its associations with the gifted Benjamin Disraeli, who took his title from the inconsiderable town on the skirt of the Beacon Hill.

At West Wycombe is a handsome church of the eighteenth century, in the London-Grecian style, and in the churchyard is a mausoleum of the same character, which, some years ago, was the scene of a curious

ceremonial. A long procession, headed by the militia of the county, wound its way from Wycombe Park, the seat of Lord Despencer, with military music, with songs and the sound of the pipe and the hautboy, everything as classical as could be contrived with the means at command; the chief object in which was a marble urn, borne aloft in all honour—a marble urn containing the heart of a poet. With due ceremony, the urn was deposited in the mausoleum, while an incantation, set to music by Dr. Arnold, was sung by a group of choristers.

The poet whose heart was thus honoured was not one of the greater members of the fraternity. At the present day, the name of Paul Whitehead might hardly be recognised as belonging to a poet, but his poems remain—"Manners" a satire—"Honour" a satire—credible imitations of Pope in his least happy numbers. But the man himself is worth a moment's consideration, although only his heart connects him with the county. About Milton and Shakespeare there are books on everybody's shelves, but it might be more difficult to meet with a satisfactory account of Paul Whitehead.

Whitehead, then, was born in Good Queen Ann's days, the son of a tailor living near St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, and was himself apprenticed to a woollen draper in the City of London. He might have passed as a model for Hogarth's *Idle Apprentice*, for, instead of devoting himself to acquire the art and mystery of woollen draping, he took to haunting play-houses, and made the acquaintance of the leading actors of the period, while he associated with the young bloods of the day and the wits and loungers at the coffee-houses. Having dissipated his little patrimony and become surety for Fleetwood, the manager at Drury Lane, for a large sum, he spent a considerable time in the liberties of the Fleet, and became one of the leading spirits of the famous debtors' prison. So far, his career was of the established type, and he might have fairly been expected to finish in George Barnwell fashion, but he had made real friends among his butterfly associates, and one of these, Sir Francis Dashwood, afterwards Lord Despencer, coming into office with Lord Bute, procured a sinecure place for his friend, who spent the rest of his life in a happy, jovial fashion, with a pleasant house on "Twitnam Common," often spending an evening at the Thatched House or with his friends of the Beefsteak Club, of which he was an original member. Dying, he bequeathed his heart to his

faithful friend and patron, Lord Despencer, a bequest which would not be highly valued in these practical days, unless by a surgeon for purposes of dissection, but which was duly appreciated by the sentiment of the age, and honoured, as we have seen, by its recipient.

After all, perhaps the most characteristic part of Buckinghamshire is the fertile Vale of Aylesbury, "lusty, firm, and fat." Old Akeman Street, a British and Roman road, passes through Aylesbury, which has an ancient history of its own, having been held till the year 571 by the Britons, when the West Saxons got possession of it, and named the place anew as Aeglesburg. At the conquest Aylesbury was a Royal manor, and was granted to one of the Conqueror's followers, under the tenure of providing straw for the King's bed and chamber, and three eels for his table in winter, and in summer straw-rushes for the floor, and two green geese. This service was due thrice every year if the King should be there so often, and as Royal visits to Aylesbury have not been frequent during the last half-dozen centuries, it is probable that the lord of the manor did not find his contract very onerous. It is not unlikely, by the way, that this custom is a survival of the old Celtic polity, and was continued during Saxon times. If we look for the Royal residence to be thus supplied, we shall find it at Brill, a village curiously named and curiously placed. The name was anciently Brechullar, shortened into Brill, the former name having a distinctly Celtic character. The village is perched on rising ground, with a network of ancient trackways converging upon it. Little patches of woodland are all that remain of Bernwood Forest, where Princes and Kings have followed the chase from the days of Cymbeline to those of the Plantagenet Kings. Anyhow here was a hunting-lodge resorted to by the West Saxon Kings, where the confessor came to enjoy the one worldly pleasure he permitted himself. Here, too, came Henry the Second with Becket, and, later, King John spent his Christmas here. Henry the Third was the last of the English kings who resorted to Brill, and from that time the straw and the rushes, the eels and the green geese of the Lord of Aylesbury were no longer called for.

Legends still hang about the neighbourhood connected with the old forest of Bernwood. Here roamed a fierce wild boar—a boar which has, probably, some occult relationship to the dragon, and to the

serpent of popular mythology. One Nigel, the King's huntsman, killed the boar, and was rewarded by lands in the neighbourhood, while a horn of mystic virtues was given him in lieu of deed or charter as title of possession. This man built Bore-stall, whose name remains to testify, with a hamlet and some remains of the old manor-house, ancient and interesting, though they do not give any distinct confirmation to the legend. But the horn still remains in the possession of the Aubreys, descendants of the ancient possessors of Bore-stall, and is a relic of great interest and antiquity.

Wooton under Bernwood is the original seat of the Grenville family, which acquired, by creation, the ancient but rather unlucky honours of the Dukedom of Buckingham. The ancient "gag" of "Off with his head—so much for Buckingham!" seems to have been applicable to a good many of the title—the dagger of Felton, and the "worst inn's worst room," suggest the not very happy ending of later possessors of the title. The spell seemed still existing when in 1847 the famed collection of art-treasures at Stowe were brought to the hammer to pay off debts amounting to a million and a half.

Quarrendon is another ancient seat within the limits of Bernwood, with remains of the mansion of the Lees, afterwards Earls of Lichfield, and of the beautiful chapel adjoining, of the fourteenth century, once crowded with the elaborate monuments of the family. One of these still remains, although reported as much mutilated and in danger from the ruinous state of the chapel, as sarcophagus, with effigy of Sir Henry Lee, K.G., champion to Queen Elizabeth.

Within the same district of Aylesbury Vale is Princes Risborough, already mentioned as the residence of the Black Prince, and Monks Risborough adjoining belonged to the monks of Christchurch, Canterbury, from a period anterior to the Conquest. Near Whiteleaf in this parish, in the flank of one of the chalk hills on the Chiltern range, is scored a great cross cut out of the turf, which was long the object of a periodical scouring, like that of the white horse made famous by Tom Brown. Now, whether this was intended to keep in memory some Saxon victory, or was simply a freak of the tenants of the monks of Canterbury as a mark of their connection with the Church, there are no means of determining. But if the latter supposition be correct, this simple memorial has survived all the more substantial

evidences of the rule of the monks, for although Buckinghamshire once possessed its full share of abbeys and nunneries, their destruction has been so complete that their very ruins have been cleared away and turned to other uses. Nor have the old feudal castles fared any better. Castles there were at Buckingham—Castlethorpe, Lavendon, Whitchurch, and several others, but every vestige of them has disappeared, and even the sites can hardly be traced.

## LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNNE," ETC., ETC.

### CHAPTER XXXIX.

SPRING came in with a leap and a bound that year. From the greening woodland and the hedgerows at Stanham there arose a fine racket of love-making and nest-building among the linnets and thrushes; even in London, amid the gutters and chimney-pots, one little sooty sparrow was chirruping cheerily to another, "Come live with me and be my love," as it plumed itself rejoicingly in the warm sunshine.

Yet there were one or two dark corners into which spring sunshine had never a chance of forcing entrance, let it try as it might. Notably into the vaults below the London churches, where the hearts of the coffined dead had been quietly going to dust for the past hundred years or so; nor through the closely-shuttered windows of Rodney Thorne's rooms in Jermyn Street, where Rodney's mother still daily takes her place at the dead man's writing-table—the table that has the dark, never-to-be-cleansed-away stain upon it.

It matters nothing to her that, without, the whole of creation is being quickened into a glad, new young life. It might be rotting in the throes of a lingering decay for all she cares, this weary, sick-souled woman, whose lips never form now in words of prayer or blessing, whose heart has emptied itself of every thought, hope, desire, save one—a burning, feverish longing for vengeance on the woman who had driven her son to his desperate ending. She knows this craving and thirsting for revenge is sapping the springs of her life; that—more terrible thought still—her reason is slowly but surely being undermined by it. Neither thought affects her much, one way or another. She has counted well the cost of the vengeance she has yet to plan and contrive. The world has, ere

this, she knows, been lost for love; let it for once—why not?—be lost for hate.

But how is she to bring her "hate" to a practical issue—how make it work on a line or in a groove to a certain definite end? This is the thought that tortures her now, makes her brain to ache and throb, her very eyes to grow sunken, and to lose their power of seeing.

A nineteenth-century vendetta may be easy enough to plan in the pages of a novel where ways and means are made ready to the hand. In real life it is apt to be retarded—less, perhaps, by possibilities than by conventions.

For this woman, with all this accumulation of hatred in her heart, yet will not bring herself to violate one of the least of society's dictums. That which she will do shall come with the weight of law, authority, and right upon Ellinor's head, not because she has any special love or reverence for law, authority, or right, but because on the side of these stand ranged her social standing, her dignity; and her dignity is every whit as dear to her as her vengeance.

For instance, it would be easy enough for her to make her way into Ellinor's presence, and with the very pistol that ended Rodney's life end that beautiful false woman's. That would be an easy thing to do. She knows her will would be strong enough, her hand steady enough for such a deed. She knows, too, in her inmost heart, that it is not the fear of the scaffold that deters her from it. That, too, she knows she could endure—at least the hideous death itself—without flinching. But what she could not face would be the gaping crowd, the tattle of the newspapers, the herding with criminals, the hangman's hand upon her shoulder. That she could not endure.

Also it would be easy enough for her to make the round of her friend's houses spreading everywhere the news of Ellinor's falseness and Rodney's wrongs. But there would be a lack of dignity about this course, which caused it to be speedily consigned to the limbo to which the other had already been dismissed. This would be simply to descend to the level of some village gossip or club scandal-monger, neither of which rôles has she any intention of adopting as her own.

No; her blow when she strikes shall give as much honour to the hand that deals it as it gives contumely to the one who receives it. The how, the where, the when, are the chief things that remain to be determined now.



It seemed to Mrs. Thorne that this "how, where, and when," could be better determined in the solitariness and gloom of Rodney's chambers (redolent still of the dead man's vices and virtues), than elsewhere in the wide world. So she took what seemed to her intimate friends a strange resolution. She ordered a small box of necessaries to be brought to Jermyn Street, and forthwith prepared to take up her abode, for a time at any rate, in Rodney's suite of rooms.

Not a servant should enter those rooms she decreed, to make them habitable and comfortable; no unhallowed hand should remove the weight of overlying dust, or lay finger on the most insignificant of the dead man's possessions. No; as Rodney left his rooms so should they remain for her use. No one but his mother, who would shed the last drop of her blood to avenge his memory, should cross their threshold.

When she wanted food, she would drive to a neighbouring hotel, and get it there; but back again here she would come, to sit in Rodney's chairs, write her letters at that table with the awful stain upon it, and with her head upon Rodney's pillow at night, she would, between her snatches of sleep, plan her desperate vengeance.

The days she had passed in Rodney's closely-shut sitting-room had been terrible enough, but the nights when she lay only half-sleeping on Rodney's bed had an element of tragedy all their own.

Never an evening-prayer passed her lips now, but there was not a night that before she lay down she did not press her lips to Rodney's pillows, saying:

"Rodney, come to me! In my dreams, if you can come no other way; but in any case, come! Stand by my side, and show me what you would have me do."

And one night, to the mother's now rapidly weakening and disordered senses, her prayer seemed answered.

Rodney himself, with face-cloth bound about his head, as he had lain in his coffin, seemed to stand by her side, and in solemn tones to speak to her.

#### CHAPTER XL.

SOCIETY for a time commented much on Mrs. Thorne's changed and aged appearance.

Very soon, however, society was to have other items for gossip. One was the unexpected engagement of Miss Yorke to young Mr. Wickham; another, the sudden determination of Miss Yorke's old uncle to take

a house in Grosvenor Square, and set up an establishment for the season.

"Such an unambitious marriage for a girl with her pretensions," said one Countess to another, discussing item number one.

And "Such a confirmed old bachelor, diner-out, club-worshipper," said a masculine purveyor of gossip, discussing item number two at the "Junior United."

Both facts were well talked over, and not a doubt they reached Mrs. Thorne's ears as she sat in the silence and solitude of Rodney's rooms, for she had expressly assigned to her maid the task of conveying to her every possible particular concerning Miss Yorke and Miss Yorke's doings.

Uncle Hugh, however, had not lightly suffered himself to be talked out of his comfortable rooms in The Albany and into a house in Grosvenor Square, well appointed and luxurious though it might be. He had always been in the habit of saying it would take an earthquake to dislodge him from his quarters. Something had occurred, as much outside his experience as an earthquake would have been, and he was dislodged.

Thus it had happened. Sir Peter and Lady Moulesey having heard, in their laborious pursuit of that ignis fatuus, health, that some all-but miraculous cures in gout, lumbago, rheumatism, and similar ailments had been wrought by a certain doctor at Bath, had suddenly decided that Bath, and no other city, must henceforward be their place of abode. Uncle Hugh was duly informed of the fact, and to Ellinor the intimation was made, as politely as possible, that her visit must, of necessity, come to an end.

Uncle Hugh at once betook himself to Grafton Street to discuss the matter with his niece.

"Now," he said a little brusquely, "you don't expect me, I hope, to find you quarters and a chaperon for the season! Where are your mother and Juliet going next? The Riviera will be getting too hot for them soon; you had better join them."

With the last word he seated himself, with an emphasis that made the chair creak again, facing Ellinor on her sofa, kicking aside a footstool which stood in the way of his patent-leather boots.

Ellinor greatly affected sofas. They gave her ampler scope for her long supple attitudes than any modern chairs could. She was leaning back now a very queen of graceful languor. She was dressed in a rich, wine-red velvet, with soft falling

lace about the neck and arms, her hands folded lay idly in her lap, her full white eyelids drooped till the shadow of their dark curled fringes rested on her cheek.

Her voice did not rise a semi-tone as she answered calmly:

"It matters nothing to me where my mother and Juliet are going. I shall not join them. Juliets may die Juliet-fashion; I shall die mine."

"Wha—at!" And Uncle Hugh started violently in his chair, throwing back his head till the sparse hair that adorned his brows seemed to stand up in ridges on either side above his ears.

"I suppose I ought to have told you before, but I really did not feel equal to it. You know I always hated disagreeable subjects, and this is an intensely disagreeable one. Lucy, will you kindly go to my desk and get out that letter of Dr. — oh, I always forget his name. You know, dear, the man I wrote to the other day."

Lucy, with bowed head, did as she was requested. And Uncle Hugh had spread before him a physician's letter which in bland language that insinuated apologies for the terrible truth it had to tell, conveyed the fact that provided the utmost care were exercised, and a strict regimen followed, Miss Yorke's life might be prolonged another year.

"I wrote to him after I had seen him," Ellinor explained composedly; "otherwise I am certain he would have been far too polite to have told me the truth. I told him I had so many arrangements to make, that it was necessary to be a little exact in the matter, and that is what he says, you see."

Uncle Hugh's face, as he read the letter, went through changes of expression sufficient to have suggested an additional chapter to Darwin's book on the emotions. Yet as he folded and returned the missive to Lucy, all he could find breath to say was:

"Good goodness! Good goodness!" and again, "Good goodness!"

Yet after all it was no new thing for him thus to hear sentence of death pronounced on members of his family. There had been his own mother, his own sister, and Ellinor's father and sister all startled, as it were, out of their life into the churchyard—just, too, when that life had seemed at its freshest and best.

But somehow they had none of them comforted themselves in their extremity as Ellinor saw fit to do now.

"I thought you would be surprised,"

she went on, "and I'm glad I've got through the telling, as it had to be done——"

"Nell, Nell," interrupted the old gentleman a little huskily, "you'll do what this man tells you—take care of yourself and all that, won't you?"

Ellinor smiled.

"I haven't the faintest intention of doing any one of the things he directs. As I have said before, everyone must die in his own fashion, and I mean to die in mine."

"But—but——"

"Please don't interrupt me, Uncle Hugh. There are two or three things I want to ask you to do for me. I should like to get through all the necessary disagreeable things that have to be done this morning, if you don't mind."

"Go on," said Uncle Hugh, huskily still.

"Well, as I told you, I want to die in my own fashion, not in anybody else's. I want the last year of my life to be its most delightful and best, and, as I can't conceive anything better and more delightful than a season in London, with a full purse at command, I want to spend my last season in London, and have your full purse at my command."

"Go on—go on," said Uncle Hugh again, and this time with an audible sigh; but whether the sigh was breathed on Ellinor's behalf, or on behalf of those bachelor comforts which somehow seemed to be retreating into the dim distance, it would be hard to say.

"I fear I may have to ask you to do for me some things you won't like doing," Ellinor went on, "but I will try and make them as little tiresome as possible. In the first place I want you to hire a furnished house for me in one of the best parts of London, buy horses and carriages for me."

"I expected this," murmured Uncle Hugh.

"Yes?" and Ellinor smiled sweetly up at him. "Well, of course it will cost a good deal of money; but you always intended me to have all your money, didn't you? Very well, then, if you'll let me spend some of it now, I shall be very much obliged to you."

"Nell," said the old gentleman with real feeling, "I would let you spend every sixpence I have in the world, if—if——"

"Thank you, Uncle Hugh; I know what you mean. Well, if you'll let me spend a little now of what you have I shall be very glad. First then, there is the house to be taken."

Uncle Hugh gave here a loud, long cough. This was the worst part of all.

"We have decided about that, haven't

we?" Ellinor went on, not heeding the interruption. "And I want everything about the house—servants, furniture, horses, carriages—everything to be as near perfection as possible!"

"I understand—I understand."

"And I want carte blanche to do exactly what I please in the house—invite whom I please, spend as much money as I please."

"My dear, will it be a ball every night?" said Uncle Hugh, making a wintry little effort at cheeriness.

"Oh dear no. That would not be my idea of entertaining. I only wish to give one ball, but it shall be the ball of the season."

"No doubt—no doubt."

"And this ball I will give—let me think—the first week in July. Yes, that would suit. Uncle Hugh!" This in a totally different tone to any she had used before.

"Yes, what is it?"

"You need only take the house to the end of July. Do you understand?"

But Uncle Hugh was at that moment seized with another loud, long fit of coughing, which effectually prevented his reply.

Lucy, too, at that moment suddenly covered her face with her handkerchief, and hurriedly left the room.

Ellinor looked after her.

"She is always doing that now. She has no self-control," she said in a slightly aggrieved tone. Then once more she went on cataloguing her intentions and wishes.

"As I was saying, my ball shall be the ball of the season. But there is something else to follow, and that I want you to begin to set going at once. I want you to get a yacht for me."

"A yacht, Nell?"

"Yes, a yacht; and I want it to be one of the best that is in the market, and I want it to be refurnished and redecorated in the grandest style imaginable. I want it to be queenly—no, imperial. The sort of thing Cleopatra might have gone forth to meet Anthony in."

"Nell!"

"I mean it. I will arrange and order everything about it myself. I won't mind what time and trouble I give to it, and you must not mind what money you spend on it. And when it is done I want it to lie off Cowes for everybody to see it."

"Good goodness—good goodness!" exclaimed Uncle Hugh again.

"I mean it. I wish it to be absolutely imperial—nothing less will suit me—in every

way. I want it to be lavishly, superbly decorated. I want it to be so beautiful that everyone who sees it will be silenced and struck dumb with its beauty. A yacht, you know, can be made an exquisitely beautiful thing if the right lines are followed."

Uncle Hugh began to recover himself.

"Well, we'll see what can be done, Nell. You always had a fine taste—'pon my soul, a very fine taste! What's the next thing you want done?"

For a moment there came no answer.

"I mean," reiterated the old gentleman, "what will follow this yacht business? When it's all ready, and everybody has stared at it to their heart's content, what is to follow?"

"I shall go on board."

"Well, I suppose so. And what then? What comes after?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing?"

"Nothing." Said as composedly and tranquilly as though the old gentleman had asked her, as he so often did: "Nell, how much money have you left in your purse?"

There fell a silence between them. Then, with sudden electric force, it flashed into his mind that this girl, who sat so tranquilly facing him with idle hands and drooping eyelids, had been planning out, not some delicious sea-trip to a distant sunny shore as he had imagined, but literally her voyage to the unknown land "whence no traveller returns"; that with her beauty at its best, her health, to appearance, at any rate, unbroken, she meant to disappear from the eyes of the crowd, and in solemn loneliness on mid-ocean to die.

For an instant a mist rose before his eyes, then he stumbled to his feet.

"Nell," he said in a low, broken voice, "it shall be as you wish—everything shall be as you wish."

He did not trust himself to kiss her, nor even to touch her hand, but with hurried steps made his way down the stairs and out into the fresh air.

Thus it was that Uncle Hugh came to hire a house for the season in Grosvenor Square.

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No. 854. NEW SERIES. SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 1885. PRICE TWOPENCE

### "THE FLOWER OF DOOM;"

OR, THE CONSPIRATOR.

A SHORT SERIAL STORY.

By MISS BETHAM-EDWARDS,

Author of "Kitty," "Love and Mirage," etc., etc.

#### CHAPTER VII. THE FLOWER OF DESTINY, AND A DISCOURSE UPON A PASTY.

How was the tenor of Bernarda's daily existence changed by those Sunday visits! Edgeworth came regularly, and, although their talk was for the most part of a harmless personal kind, the door would be occasionally thrown wide upon a black, unconscionable world. Bernarda realised that the even, guileless life with flowers was over; vanished the eager quest in flowery dingles and sun-bright fields; gone, never to return, the rapturous hours amid tropic splendours; and, ere long, would be ended, too, the days sweetened and subdued by congenial toil, the companionship of her innocent, sportive, flower-wearing girls, and the task of beautifying thousands of unknown dwellings with imperishable flowers. It seemed to Bernarda that in parting with this familiar calling, she was bidding farewell, not only to her best friend, but to a kind of talisman. The necessity of earning daily bread, and the privilege of earning it in a manner positively fascinating to one of her especial turn of mind, had, perhaps, staved off mental shipwreck. She had said this to herself again and again as she recalled the past, and lived over again the shock that Edgeworth's conduct had given her moral nature. Desertion, she would not call it. He had given her up in a moment of desperate fortunes. To have kept to his word would have seemed doing her wrong. The pansy she wore recalled that later and far less pardonable dereliction, the

unbroken silence of ten long years. Her betrothal-flower worn so constantly symbolised many things; but above all, the injustice at the root of such unfaithfulness. She wore it as a reminder to be just to a hair's breadth in her dealings with others, especially where their affections were concerned. She would never, for instance, encourage the sentimental clinging of any of her girls, or seem to care for them in the least degree more than was really the case. She was ever on her guard against receiving or according hasty affection.

In a certain fanciful sense she regarded her pansy as a flower of destiny, and not even Edgeworth's raileries about the death's-head could now make her exchange it for any other. Why should she forget the sweetest, sternest lesson of her life?

In her wild girlish days she had passionately loved the man whom she was now going to marry without any love on her side or his own. But the secret she had ever kept, and even Edgeworth would never know it now. A vindictive or less generous woman would have regarded such a position very differently. Bernarda put personal motives aside, and only welcomed her lover's tardy reparation as a chance of moral rescue for himself. Her love for him was dead. For all that, she might win him back, and stop him mid-way in his career.

As yet her conduct was undefined, and the future lay veiled in uncertainty. But one thing was clear. If these frequent visits of Edgeworth's changed the tenor of Bernarda's life, they were certainly not without influence on his own. The oftener he came, the oftener he wanted to come. The more he confided in her, the more, it seemed, he must confide. In spite, moreover, of an evident desire to be circumspect, he would sometimes manifest

the incaution that seems part of a conspirator's character. A thousand circumstances, mere trifles in themselves, showed Bernarda whither she was drifting. The pleasant sense of freedom and safety born of obscurity could be hers no longer. Already she had linked her fate with Edgeworth's. To herself she belonged not now.

Winter set in early that year, November snows covering October roses, but the more inclement and boisterous the weather, the more alertly he came.

Bernarda's pretty room, with its close-drawn curtains and blazing logs, seemed to exercise a kind of glamour over him. The long, if not confidential, yet unconstrained talks; the solicitude, and, in a certain sense, protectiveness found by a man at a woman's fireside; the feeling of fellowship evoked by the fragrant tea, sipped from her shamrock cups—these things soon became matters of habit, all the more agreeable because they came as a relief to the life he led outside Bernarda's doors. Their relations remained apparently the same, not a trace of awakening passion on his side or of revived affection on hers. But without being young and romantic, an affianced bride and bridegroom may find much to say to each other. She could show that concern for his health becoming a woman about to exchange the name of friend for that of wife. He would find himself criticising her dress or consulting her taste as to the matter of a new fur-bordered coat.

One evening, after a longer and livelier visit than usual, he begged Bernarda's permission to remain to supper.

"Anyhow, do not drive me out for another hour," he said, drawing aside the curtain an inch, and pointing to the snow-flakes that fell thick and fast. "I know what your modest little seven o'clock suppers are, my dear; I have encountered the singing-girl with her tray before now. Well, share your glass of milk and sandwich with me for once—just once! Then I shall have nothing to do but to find my way home, and go to bed."

Bernarda let him have his way. Certainly, she reasoned with herself, her company was the best, or at least the safest for him just now. His very gaiety and high spirits frightened her. She felt sure that he was standing on the edge of a precipice; was, perhaps, lending himself to some plot more dreadful than any with which such conspiracies had as yet terrified the world.

But she could not, dared not question him, or even lead him into confidences. Her little piano stood open, and, uninvited, she sat down to play and sing to him. It was impossible that there should be any longer a vestige of ceremoniousness between two friends about to seal their friendship by marriage in a few weeks. Bernarda, moreover, was deliberately laying herself out to please. No woman could be less of a coquette than she. But without trying to captivate his fancy she might regain her empire over his affections, and every hour of easy, fireside intercourse made the task easier.

"Ah, a song or two before we sup and say good-night," he said, with a smile of satisfaction; "a song of our youth—a song of our country—eh, Erna?"

She began a pathetic little ballad, and lazily from his armchair he joined in the refrain. The very freedom of this intercourse constituted its chief charm in his mind. Had he felt compelled to stand by the piano, deferentially turning over the leaves, even Bernarda's music would have been no longer a refreshment.

So effortless, almost mechanical, sounded that rich, sweet voice of his on Bernarda's ears that she hardly felt sure if he were listening at all.

He seemed to be almost unconsciously repeating words and melody familiar to him from childhood.

Nor did she ever choose her songs with any set purpose. She would not point a moral at him in this way. The moral must come of itself, just as some especial butterfly, cloud, or field-flower strikes the careless eye, and preaches to the unexpectant mind. Thus an hour passed, and the singing-girl appeared with the supper-tray. But Bernarda had given a stealthy order, and the meal was suited to the appetite of a hungry man. There was a bottle of good claret. There was a meat pasty hot, from an Italian oven close by; something to fall back upon in the shape of that dainty of all dainties, a Suffolk ham sweetened by old harvest-beer; and lastly, for grace, rather than gross appetite, the lighter cakes that women love—a cake, a pear, and a little lump of vermilion-coloured jelly, clear as a sea-anemone.

"On my word," he said, "you feast me as if I were a prince! Although why princes should ever be feasted I cannot conceive, seeing that they are so surfeited with good things, prison-fare is the only change one could think of as affording a

possible treat to them. Was ever a woman like you? Nothing whatever seems a trouble!"

"You must have consorted with dolts and brainless idiots all these years," Bernarda replied, quietly satiric. "Is it such a stroke of genius to send for a pasty when your next door neighbour happens to be a confectioner?"

"The matter is much more complicated than you think," he said, as he ate with admirable relish, soon uninvited replenishing her plate and his own. "In the first place, there is to think of the pasty; in the second, to have tested the excellency of the pasty beforehand; in the third, to be perfectly sure that the said pasty will come steaming hot to table; in the fourth, to be equally certain that your guest's especial digestion is adapted to a ticklish thing like a pasty; in the fifth, to exercise mathematical reasoning concerning the pasty—if too small, your visitor is afraid to eat his fill, if too large, appetite is surfeited in advance—sixthly—"

"My dear Edgeworth," Bernarda broke in merrily, laying a long, slender, beautiful hand on his arm, "in Heaven's name finish your tirade! There is the ham to moralise upon, and when was ever all said that can possibly be said about so suggestive a thing as a ham?"

"You don't suppose I am going to take the ham in hand to-day?" he said, becoming sportive as herself. "My dear girl, I forbid you to touch it either; you shall see me do justice to the ham, both as a caterer and a rhetorician, to-morrow, and how many to-morrows! You will never finish it without me. That is quite certain!"

#### CHAPTER VIII. THE VOICE FATILOQUENT.

THAT genial, almost happy evening ended early. Ten had not yet chimed from the thousand City churches when the lights were put out in Bernarda's house, and she was making ready for rest with a smile on her lips. Edgeworth's wit and high spirits were irresistible, and his kind, almost affectionate leave-taking touched her. He was over-grateful for such little services, she thought; a song, a glowing hearth, a meal—these were all she had given him, yet he had lingered on the threshold to thank her again and again.

Since their first interview he had never kissed her. She shrank from anything like a lover-like demonstration, and he saw it. Why should there be any semblance

between them of a feeling that did not exist, her face said always? So they invariably met and parted after the manner of mere friends, although every hour of intercourse brought them nearer together.

The smile lingered on Bernarda's face to-night, as, wrapped in a fleecy white dressing-gown, and leaning back in a fauteuil, she abandoned herself to the pleasant task of combing her long black hair. For a moment she allowed her mind to indulge in a strange, a comfortable delusion. This Edgeworth could never become a man of crime and villainy after all. From under the upas-tree of evil he would, slowly, perchance, but surely pass. Not love, but something purer, more lasting, better, would step by step entice him into ways of righteousness and peace. By friendship should the man she had once adored be rescued from perdition now.

On a sudden she was aroused from these pleasant dreams by a painful apparition—reality it hardly seemed to her in that first moment of shocked surprise.

There stood her bright, sportive Marion, a girl almost Undine-like in her incapacity to grasp the serious side of things—there stood the ever-radiant, ever-singing Marion, white and trembling, a prey to abject terror.

"Mistress!" cried the girl, coming to Bernarda's side and hiding her face in the folds of her white dressing-gown—"mistress, I dare not sleep alone to-night. We are watched. The wicked have designs against us."

"Foolish child!" Bernarda said as she gently shook off the timid, clinging thing, and rose with a look of determination; "sleep alone you shall not if you dread trolls and wraiths. There is my sofa for you. But come, show me where lurk these would-be thieves and assassins of two harmless women, for there is no money or other treasure in the house, my Marion. You must be dreaming."

"You will find no one," said the girl, putting back her curls with a childish effort to be self-controlled; "it is the mystery that frightens me. These dark, peering faces come and go like shadows. The stealthy footsteps are here one moment, gone the next. And at night I hear voices, horrid whispers close by, yet never a creature is to be seen."

Light was breaking on Bernarda's mind now, but for a moment she clutched at another interpretation. She scrutinised her little maiden as a physician inspects a patient.

"You are ailing, perhaps! I must send you home for a change."

"No; I am as well as can be. I do not wish to leave you," the girl said, fondly taking one of her mistress's white hands, and stroking her own cheek with it.

"Then," Bernarda answered, smiling down indulgently on the pale, pretty, weeping child, "then we must have the lame sister to keep you company till you get rid of these foolish fancies. And now I will go and look round the house, then to bed."

"Mistress," Marion burst out at last, unable any longer to keep back her dreadful revelation, forced by pure terror into confronting Bernarda's displeasure, "I must speak out. The house has been watched from the first day Mr. Edgeworth set foot in it."

Bernarda turned pale then as her little serving-maid. There had spoken no child's fantasy, but a voice fatiloquent, a voice of doom! She controlled herself, however; not for worlds should anyone, much less a sixteen-year-old girl, know what was passing in her mind, or have any share in her affairs. Very kindly she put Marion away, and reiterated her commands.

"To bed—to bed; away with such fancies!" she cried. "To-night on my sofa, and to-morrow the lame sister comes to keep her foolish Marion company."

It was characteristic of both mistress and maid that Bernarda felt under no necessity to hold up a warning finger and whisper the word "Beware!" in Marion's ear now. Even in a crisis like this she could entirely trust the girl's sense of honour. Not even the lame sister would know of the connexion in Marion's mind between Edgeworth's visits and the mysterious signs, should they be repeated. Bernarda's affairs were sacred. Alone she now set out on the nightly round of inspection, hitherto carelessly made. It behoved her, as mistress of the house, to see that keys were turned, shutters closed, and bars drawn, but the fear of marauders had never so much as crossed her mind. There was no gold in the house, nor treasure either, and what else should such gentry seek? Nor had it occurred to her that Edgeworth's visits might prove a source of danger to herself. But was it so?

An unexpected conviction now flashed across her mind. Towards Edgeworth the portent was surely directed.

Over his head was hung the sword of Damocles. The embroidery mistress and her singing-girl were as safe as if the conspirator had never crossed their path; but the ministers of the law were keeping closest watch over him. Perhaps already he had forfeited the citizen's right to beat large. Any day, any hour, he might find himself within prison walls; duress, suffering, and ignominy his portion for the remainder of his days.

To what horrid deed might he not have given his adherence? To what death-warrant universal set his sign manual?

He should be forthwith warned of his peril, and then it would rest with him to contrive his own safety. She determined to think no more that night, but see to her bolts and bars, and then go to sleep as if nothing had happened.

To Bernarda, as to many other women in the flower of life and gifted with a splendid physique, bodily fear was unknown. She was quite ready to encounter midnight prowlers, should any lurk within her precincts.

The day had been one of snow-storm, with driving gusts, but the night was starlit and calm. Bernarda, with a fur cloak thrown over her, proceeded to inspect the house from top to bottom. It was no showy semi-detached villa, run up within recent years by contract, but a solid piece of red-brick masonry, perhaps two hundred years old. There are few such houses nowadays, and every one, as it falls to the hammer, is snapped up by an artist. From an artist, indeed, Bernarda leased the house, turning the studio to good account as a work-room, and utilising other nooks and corners not found in brand-new constructions. There was a small garden at the back; and who can keep thieves or spies out of a house with a garden, or, indeed, any house at all? mused Bernarda, smiling ruefully. The only way to be free from anxiety on this score is to have nothing worth stealing or watching. She gave up the task as hopeless, and went back to her warm chamber. The gas was turned down and the fire burned low, but Marion's golden hair seemed to light up the place. She wore one of those simple, childish night-gowns, gathered round the throat by a white ribbon, and over the plain folds fell her short, bright curls, as a seraph's in an old picture. The hair was not encumberingly long, no mere silken yellow veil, rather a little rippling cloud of shifting gold, and no picture could be

fairer than the purely-outlined face thus encircled. A tear still lingered on the rosy cheek, but there was no other sign of dismay. Marion slumbered as if she had been carolling all day long. Strange that Bernarda should never have noticed such sudden dumbness of her singing-bird! The child's sweet, hitherto irrepressible contralto had stopped on a sudden, leaving her part of the house mute as an uninhabited place, and Bernarda had taken no heed. As she now, however, bent over the guileless sleeper, tears of shame, anguish, and remorse rose to her eyes. Not that she especially cared for her blonde, trilling, caressing Marion; she knew that the girl would attach herself as fondly to any other employer in a week. A feeling, deeper, intenser far than mere liking, caused those rare tears to flow. It was her passionate sense of justice which had been here outraged. In Marion she already saw a victim of that unholy league of which Edgeworth boasted himself the moving spirit. By what right had he and his associates thus to rob such innocent lives of peace and trustfulness? For the young are very impressionable, and Marion might be far more terrified than she had ventured to avow. Perhaps years would elapse ere her mind recovered its balance, and a girl once as fearless as any girl in London would venture to sit alone on a winter evening.

Marion should be sent away next day, Bernarda said. If Edgeworth's presence brought peril with it, then the hazard should be her own only. Again and again, and even with more distinctness, now that warning voice reached her from afar, she was beginning to realise, although, as yet, but in a dim and undefined way, that she and peace of mind had parted company. Waking or sleeping, busy or idle, there was no more security for her, no sweet inner sense of safety and repose. It was not very likely that she could do Edgeworth much good. He had sought her out too late, as far as his own redemption was concerned. But if she could not bend the course of his existence, how was he already shaping hers? She shuddered as she looked into the future, or even glanced so far ahead as the morrow. To what dark fate had she surrendered herself in promising to marry this man? Already that flower of hers, worn as a token of lost love, seemed no longer a flower of destiny, but of doom. The death's-head which Edgeworth's fancy had discerned on its petals

recurred to her. Was not the flower symbolic, fit love-token for such hands to gather? But no guilt had stained them when years ago he plucked a pansy for his love, and, if she kept painful vigils now, it was not for the grief he had caused her or the dangers that beset her own path, but for the degradation of that generous nature, the perversion of that once candid soul.

### THE METHODS OF AUTHORS.

THE method by which a man works is always interesting as an indication of character. So thinks the biographer of Buckle, whose method was chiefly remarkable for careful, systematic industry and punctilious accuracy. His memory appeared to be almost faultless, yet he took as much precaution against failure as if he dared not trust it. He invariably read with "paper and pencil in his hand, making copious references for future consideration. How laboriously this system was acted upon can be appreciated only by those who have seen his note-books, in which the passages so marked during his reading were either copied or referred to under proper heads. Volume after volume was thus filled, written with the same precise neatness that characterises his MS. for the press, and indexed with care so that immediate reference might be made to any topic. But careful as these extracts and references were made, there was not a quotation in one of the copious notes that accompanied his work that was not verified by collation with the original from which it was taken."

Trollope's system is well known, but we may quote a curious explanation of his fertility.

"When I have commenced a new book I have always prepared a diary, divided into weeks, and carried it on for the period which I have allowed myself for the completion of the work. In this I have entered day by day the number of pages I have written, so that if at any time I have slipped into idleness for a day or two, the record of that idleness has been there staring me in the face, and demanding of me increased labour, so that the deficiency might be supplied. According to the circumstances of the time—whether my other business might be then heavy or light, or whether the book which I was writing was or was not wanted with speed—I have



allotted myself so many pages a week. The average number has been about forty. It has been placed as low as twenty, and has risen to one hundred and twelve. And as a page is an ambiguous term, my page has been made to contain two hundred and fifty words; and, as words, if not watched, will have a tendency to straggle, I have had every word counted as I went."

Much has been said about the quality of Mr. Trollope's work. There seems a consensus of opinion that it had degenerated. "Mr. Trollope," says Mr. Freeman, "had certainly gone far to write himself out. His later work is far from being so good as his earlier. But, after all, his worst work is better than a great many other people's best; and, considering the way in which it was done, it is wonderful that it was done at all. I, myself, know what fixed hours of work are, and their value; but I could not undertake to write about William Rufus or Appius Claudius up to a certain moment on the clock, and to stop at that moment. I suppose it was from his habits of official business that Mr. Trollope learned to do it, and every man undoubtedly knows best how to do his own work. Still it is strange that works of imagination did not suffer by such a way of doing." Mr. James Payn says that Trollope has injured his reputation by publishing his methods of writing, and the *Daily News*, in referring to Alphonse Daudet's history of his own novels, doubts whether he has acted wisely. As the editor says, "An effect of almost too elaborate art—a feeling that we are looking at a mosaic painfully made up of little pieces picked out of real life and fitted together, has often been present to the consciousness of M. Daudet's readers. That feeling is justified by his description of his creative efforts."

M. Daudet's earlier works were light and humorous, like *Tartarin*, or they were idyllic, and full of Provençal scenery, the nature and the nightingales of M. Daudet's birthplace, the South. One night at the theatre, when watching the splendid failure of an idyllic Provençal sort of play, M. Daudet made up his mind that he must give the public sterner stuff, and describe the familiar Parisian scenery of streets and quais. His wise determination was the origin of his novels, *Jack*, *Froment Jeune et Risler Aîné*, and the rest. Up to that time, M. Daudet, with M. Zola, M. Flaubert, and the brothers Goncourt, had all been more or less unpopular authors. It is not long ago since they had

a little club of the unsuccessful, and M. Daudet was the first of the company who began to blossom out into numerous editions. M. Daudet's secret as a novelist, as far as the secret is communicable, seems to be his wonderfully close study of actual life, and his unscrupulousness in reproducing its details almost without disguise. He frankly confesses that not only the characters in his political novels, but in his other works, are drawn straight from living persons.

The scenery is all sketched from nature, M. Daudet describing the vast factories with which he was familiar when, at the age of sixteen, he began to earn his own living, or the interiors to which he was admitted by virtue of his position under a great man of the late Imperial administration. Places about which he did not know much and which needed to be introduced into his tales, M. Daudet visited with his note-book. M. Daudet's mode of work is, first, to see his plot and main incidents clearly; to arrive at a full understanding of his characters, then to map out his chapters, and then, he says, his fingers tingle to be at work. He writes rapidly, handing each wet slip of paper to Madame Daudet for criticism and approval. There is no such sound criticism, he says, as this helpful collaborator, who withal is "so little a woman of letters." When a number of chapters are finished, M. Daudet finds it well to begin publishing his novel in a journal. Thus he is obliged to finish within a certain date; he cannot go back to make alterations; he cannot afford time to write a page a dozen times over, as a conscientious artist often wishes to do.

The Quaker poet, Whittier, considers himself unlike other authors, for he says he never had any method. "When I felt like it," he says, "I wrote, and I neither had the health nor the patience to work over it afterwards. It usually went as it was originally completed." Charles Dickens had the faculty of making his fictitious characters real to himself. Charlotte Brontë was equally interested in the characters she drew. Whilst writing *Jane Eyre*, she became intensely concerned in the fortunes of her heroine, whose smallness and plainness corresponded with her own. When she had brought the little Jane to *Thornfield*, her enthusiasm had grown so great that she could not stop. She went on writing incessantly for weeks. At the end of this time she had made the minute woman conquer temptation, and in the

dawn of the summer morning leave Thornfield . . . . "After Jane left Thornfield, the rest of the book," says Miss Martineau, "was written with less vehemence and with more anxious care—the world adds, with less vigour and interest." Wilkie Collins's book, *Heart and Science*, so mercilessly excited him that he says he continued writing week after week without a day's interval or rest. "Rest was impossible. I made a desperate effort; rushed to the sea; went sailing and fishing; and was writing my book all the time 'in my head' as the children say. The one wise course to take was to go back to my desk and empty my head, and then rest. My nerves are too much shaken for travelling. An armchair and a cigar, and a hundred and fiftieth reading of the glorious Walter Scott—King, Emperor, and President of Novelists—there is the regimen that is doing me good. All the other novel-writers I can read while I am at work myself. If I only look at the *Antiquary*, or *Old Mortality*, I am crushed by the sense of my own littleness, and there is no work possible for me on that day."

Literary partnerships are common in France, but in England they are confined almost exclusively to dramatists. The one well-known exception was that of Messrs. Besant and Rice. Mr. Rice's partnership with Mr. Besant commenced in 1871, and ended with the death of Mr. Rice. "It arose," explains Mr. Besant, "out of some slight articles which I contributed to his magazine, and began with the novel called *Ready-Money Mortiboy*. Of this eleven years' fellowship and intimate, almost daily intercourse, I can only say that it was carried on throughout without a single shadow of dispute or difference. James Rice was eminently a large-minded man, and things which might have proved great rocks of offence to some, he knew how to treat as the trifles they generally are."

In France, the best example of literary partnership is found in that of M. Erckmann and M. Chatrian. How these men work in concert has been described by the author of *Men of the Third Republic*.

"M. Chatrian is credited with being the more imaginative of the two. The first outlines of the plots are generally his, as also the love-scenes, and all the descriptions of Phalsbourg and the country around. M. Erckmann puts in the political reflections, furnishes the soldier-types, and elaborates those plain speeches which fit so quaintly, but well, into the mouths of

his honest peasants, sergeants, watch-makers, and schoolmasters. A clever critic remarked that Erckmann-Chatrian's characters are always hungry and eating. The blame, if any, must lie on M. Chatrian's shoulders, to whose fancy belong the steaming tureens of soup, the dishes of browned sausages and sauer-kraut, the mounds of flowery potatoes bursting plethorically through their skins. All that M. Erckmann adds to the *ménu* is the black coffee, of which he insists, with some energy, on being a connoisseur. Habitually the co-authors meet to sketch out their plots, and talk them over amid much tobacco-smoking. Then, when the story has taken clear shape in their minds, one or other of the pair writes the first chapter, leaving blanks for the dialogues or descriptions which are best suited to the competency of the other. Every chapter thus passes through both writers' hands, is revised, re-copied, and, as occasion requires, either shortened or lengthened in the process. When the whole book is written, both authors revise it again, and always with a view to curtailment. Novelists who dash off six volumes of diluted fiction in a year, and affect to think naught of the feat, would grow pensive at seeing the labour bestowed by MM. Erckmann and Chatrian on the least of their works, as well as their patient research in assuring themselves that their historical episodes are correct, and their descriptions of existing localities true to nature. But this careful industry will have its reward, for the novels of MM. Erckmann and Chatrian will live. The signs of vitality were discovered in them as soon as the two authors, nerved by their first success, settled down and produced one tale after another, all too slowly for the public demand. *The Story of a Conscript*, *Waterloo*, *The History of a Man of the People*, and above all, *The History of a Peasant*, were read with wonder as well as interest."

As an illustration of the care taken by some authors over their works, we may quote an anecdote relating to the late G. P. R. James, whose novels at one time had a very large circulation. "I found him," one of his friends says, "dolefully seated over a manuscript. He was not writing, but he was gazing at it in melancholy despair. I thought he was ill, and asked him whether this was the case. 'No,' he replied; he was physically well. What, then, was the

matter with him? I anxiously enquired. 'It's my heroine,' he replied; 'I've got her in such a fix that I cannot extricate her without a slight violation of the rules of propriety.' 'Then let her be improper, and don't let us be late for the train,' I flippantly said. 'My dear friend,' he replied, 'do you want to ruin me? Are you not aware that I live by never allowing my heroines to do anything to which the most stringent mamma might object? If once the slightest doubt were raised about my novels being sound reading for the most innocent of schoolroom girls, my occupation would be gone.' And so we missed the train; but the heroine emerged from the pages of the novel a model of all the heroine ought to be under difficult circumstances."

Much might be said of the feelings of readers in reference to the fate of the characters drawn by the novelist. "Mrs. Burnett, how could you kill Tredennis?" asked a reader of *Through One Administration*. "Why, I wrote two conclusions," was the answer. "First I killed both, but that would not do, and there was nothing for it but to kill the soldier. It broke my heart, for I loved that man, but he had to die!" On the other hand, the Mrs. Proudie of Anthony Trollope became such a bore that he determined to get rid of her by killing her.

The difference in the methods adopted by different authors is as great as the difference in their choice of subjects. There is a story quoted in illustration of the different characteristics of three great nationalities which equally illustrates the different paths which may be followed in any intellectual enterprise.

An Englishman, a Frenchman, and a German, competing for a prize offered for the best essay on the natural history of the camel, adopted each his own method of research upon the subject. The German, laying in a stock of tobacco, retired to his study in order to evolve from the depths of his philosophic consciousness the primitive notion of a camel. The Frenchman resorted to the nearest library, and ransacked its contents with a view to collect all that other men had said upon the subject. The Englishman packed his carpet-bag and set sail for the East, that he might study the habits of the animal in its original haunts. The blending of these three methods is the perfection of study; but the Frenchman's method is not unknown even among Englishmen. Nor is it to be absolutely

condemned. The man who reads a hundred books on a subject, in order to write one, confers a real benefit upon society, provided he does his work well. But some very capital work has been written without the necessity either of research or of original investigation. Trollope drew his famous Archdeacon without ever having met a live Archdeacon. He never lived in any cathedral city except London; Archdeacon Grantly was the child of "moral consciousness" alone; he knew nothing, except indirectly, about Bishops and Deans. In fact, *The Warden* was conceived not primarily as a clerical novel, but as a novel which should work out a dramatic situation—that of an honest, amiable man who was the holder, by no fault of his own, of an endowment which was in itself an abuse, and on whose devoted head should fall the thunders of those who attacked the abuse.

Bryan Waller Procter had never seen the ocean when he wrote *The Sea*; neither Schiller nor Rossini had seen Switzerland when they wrote their *William Tell*. George Cruikshank's sketches of the Boulevards and the Palais Royal, elaborated from sketches furnished to him, were wonderfully spirited and true, although he had never been across the Channel. Indeed, he never got beyond a French seaport in the course of his long life. A day at Boulogne comprehended all his Continental experiences.

Harrison Ainsworth, the Lancashire novelist, when he wrote *Rookwood* and *Jack Sheppard*, relied absolutely on his power of reading up and assimilation, and never had the slightest intercourse with thieves in his life. It is said that when he wrote the really admirable ride of Turpin to York, he only went at a great pace over the paper with a road-map and description of the country in front of him. It was only when he heard everybody say how truly the country was described, and how faithfully he had observed distances and localities, that he actually drove over the ground for the first time, and declared that it was more like his account than he could have imagined.

"A man would do well to carry a pencil in his pocket, and write down the thoughts of the moment. Those that come unsought for are generally the most valuable, and should be secured, because they seldom return." This was the advice of Lord Bacon, whose example has been followed by many eminent men. For instance, it is said of Hobbes that, when he composed

his Leviathan, he walked much, and mused as he walked, and that he had in the head of his cane a pen and inkhorn, and a note-book in his pocket. As soon as a thought darted into his mind, he entered it in his book. Miss Martineau has recorded that Barry Cornwall's favourite method of composition was indulged when alone in a crowd, and best in the streets of London. He had also a habit of running into a shop to write down his verses. Tom Moore's custom was to compose as he walked. He had a table in his garden, on which he wrote down his thoughts. When the weather was bad, he paced up and down his small study. It is extremely desirable that thoughts should be written as they rise in the mind, because, if they are not recorded at the time, they may never return. "I attach so much importance to the ideas which come during the night, or in the morning," says Gaston Plante, the electrical engineer, "that I have always, at the head of my bed, paper and pencil suspended by string, by the help of which I write every morning the ideas I have been able to conceive, particularly upon subjects of scientific research. I write these notes in obscurity, and decipher and develop them in the morning, pen in hand." The philosopher Emerson took similar pains to catch a fleeting thought, for, whenever he had a happy idea, he wrote it down, and when Mrs. Emerson, startled in the night by some unusual sound, cried, "What is the matter? Are you ill?" the philosopher softly replied, "No, my dear; only an idea."

Thackeray confessed that the title for his novel, *Vanity Fair*, came to him in the middle of the night, and that he jumped out of bed and ran three times round the room, shouting the words. Whether in town or country, Landor reflected and composed habitually out walking, and therefore preferred at all times to walk alone. So did Buckle. Wordsworth was accustomed to compose his verse in his solitary walks, carry them in his memory, and get wife or daughter to write them down on his return. His excursions and peculiar habits gave rise to some anxious beliefs amongst the ignorant peasantry. Even his sanity was questioned. The peasantry of Rydal thought him "not quite hisself," because he always walked alone, and was met at odd times and in odd places. Some poets have been in the habit of humming or repeating their verses aloud as they composed them. Southey,

for instance, boomed his verses so as to be mistaken for a bittern booming by Wilson, who was a keen sportsman. If so, Southey's voice must not have been very harmonious, for the bittern is Shakespeare's "night-raven's dismal voice."

The question of the authorship of certain popular works has given rise to a great deal of speculation. A few months ago, the Americans were puzzling their brains to discover the name of the author of *The Breadwinners*. Amongst other stinging charges against him, to induce him to break the silence, was that it was a base and craven thing to publish a book anonymously! "My motive in withholding my name is simple enough," he said to his furious critics. "I am engaged in business in which my standing would be seriously compromised were it known that I had written a novel. I am sure that my practical efficiency is not lessened by this act, but I am equally sure that I could never recover from the injury it would occasion me if known among my own colleagues. For that positive reason, and for the negative one that I do not care for publicity, I resolved to keep the knowledge of my little venture in authorship restricted to as small a circle as possible. Only two persons beside myself know who wrote *The Breadwinners*."

A far more serious dispute followed the publication of the *Vestiges of Creation* forty years ago. The theologians of Scotland were wild with rage at the audacity of the author, who would have been torn to pieces had he been discovered. In scientific circles Mr. Robert Chambers was credited with the authorship; and Henry Greville seems to have had no doubt upon the matter. In *Leaves from the Diary of Henry Greville* there is an entry under the date December 28th, 1847, as follows: "I have been reading a novel called *Jane Eyre*, which is just now making a great sensation, and which absorbed and interested me more than any novel I can recollect having read. The author is unknown. Mrs. Butler—Miss Fanny Kemble—who is greatly struck by the talent of the book, fancies it is written by Chambers—who is author of the *Vestiges of Creation*—because she thinks that whoever wrote it must, from its language, be a Scotchman, and from its sentiments be a Unitarian; and Chambers, besides answering to all these peculiarities, has an intimate friend who believes in supernatural agencies, such as are described in the last

volume of the book." Thackeray also had the credit of the book.

Nobody knew Charlotte Brontë; but she was unable to keep the secret very long. The late R. H. Horne was present at that first dinner-party given by Mr. George Smith, the publisher, when Currer Bell, then in the first flush of her fame, made her earliest appearance in a London dining-room. She was anxious to preserve the anonymity of her literary character, and was introduced by her true name. Horne, however, who sat next to her, was so fortunate as to discover her identity. Just previously he had sent to the new author, under cover of her publisher, a copy of his *Orion*. In an unguarded moment Charlotte Brontë turned to him and said:

"I was so much obliged to you, Mr. Horne, for sending me your——" But she checked herself with an inward start, having thus exploded her Currer Bell secret by identifying herself with the author of *Jane Eyre*.

"Ah, Miss Brontë," whispered the innocent cause of the misfortune, "you would never do for treasons and stratagems!"

The late John Blackwood corresponded with George Eliot some time before he knew that she was a woman. He called her "Dear George," he says, and often used expressions which a man commonly uses only to a man! After he found out who "Dear George" was, he was naturally a little anxious to recall some of the expressions he had used. Charles Dickens, however, detected what escaped the observation of most people. Writing to a correspondent in January, 1858, he said: "Will you by such roundabout ways and methods as may present themselves convey this note of thanks to the author of *Scenes of Clerical Life*, whose two first stories I can never say enough of, I think them so truly admirable! But if those two volumes, or a part of them, were not written by a woman, then shall I begin to believe that I am a woman myself."

#### BELLONA'S WORKSHOPS.

THERE is no need to ask the way to the Arsenal, finding ourselves just outside Woolwich station shortly before two o'clock, post meridian, for all along the streets a general trudge is going on, tramp, tramp, through drizzle and mud, hundreds upon hundreds of men and boys all plodding in the same

direction. A solitary but active bell is raising a discordant clangour, to the music of which, if any music can be found in it, everybody sets his pace. The whole population of the town, indeed—the male population, that is, for among all the swarms of sad-coloured garments there is not the flutter of a petticoat to be seen, or the jaunty handkerchief of a factory-girl—all the gloomy crowd is moving upon one central spot, leaving only women and children to take care of the houses and mind the shops. A squad of artillerymen is marching in the same direction, and with a few other uniforms scattered here and there, gives the slightest military aspect to the scene; but the general crowd is not distinguished by any military smartness, being indeed rather slouching and depressed in general appearance.

The crowd that is marching back to work is indeed an army in point of numbers. Something like six thousand men are employed in the Arsenal, which is the one and only centre of manufacture of all kinds of warlike implements and equipage. And here we are at the main gate of the Arsenal—a gateway of homely red brick, with a couple of old-fashioned mortars gaping over the entrance, and a low tower at the side, within which the noisy bell can be seen vigorously wagging up and down. The main gate is held by a strong body of metropolitan police, who scrutinise every face as it passes the barrier. Within is a maze of sheds and shanties with tramways running in every direction, among which rise the handsome old brick buildings of the Georgian period, the officers' quarters, and the old gun foundry, built at a time when founding a gun was a species of solemnity almost like the launching of a ship.

The Arsenal has a history that carries us farther back than its Hanoverian buildings. Some kind of a dépôt of arms occupied a small portion of the present site from the days of Elizabeth and the Armada. A store-account of the reign of Elizabeth, taken at Woolwich, is still in existence, and specifies, "IV. backs and breasts for Almayne Coralettes, beside I. od backs. Lxxv. collers with bombards. xlviii. Burgonets and huskins. cccxxxiii. murrions blacke, and xii. Burgonets, old and nothing worth." And among the old buildings pulled down in the last century was a conspicuous tower, which bore the name of Prince Rupert's Tower, while somewhere among this maze of sheds and stores, a

footpath once existed, that was known as Prince Rupert's Walk. It is well-known that the old soldier, convinced by experience of the futility of mere cavalry charges, took much to science in his later days, and was curious in the matter of chemical compounds and explosives, and it is likely enough that the Prince made a beginning of the laboratory which has grown to such huge proportions.

All this time the site of the present arsenal was known as Tower Place or King's Warren. Rabbits frisked in the sunshine, and flashed in and out of sight where now great guns show black and ominous, and where the ground shakes under the blows of the steam-hammer. As early as 1668, guns, carriages, and stores were concentrated at Woolwich, and a quarter of a century later the royal laboratory, which had been established at Greenwich, was removed to the same neighbourhood. The big guns were still cast at Moorfields, in the foundry which was later to become famous as Wesley's first chapel, till an explosion in 1716, when the guns captured in Marlborough's victories were being recast, was the cause of the establishment being removed to Woolwich. The popular story of the young Flemish engineer who foretold the explosion, and was rewarded by being made chief of the works, has no distinct corroboration from contemporary records, but the hero of the story—one Schalch, of Douay—undoubtedly became the head of the new department. In 1741 an academy or school of gunnery was established in connection with the works, the embryo of the existing Royal Military Academy on Woolwich Common, which turns out all the engineer and artillery officers of the Queen's service. Finally, in 1805, the whole establishment was dignified with the name of the Royal Arsenal, and the forty-two acres of land which constituted the original Tower Place have expanded to the three hundred and thirty-three acres—be the same more or less—now covered by this great factory of warlike implements, probably the most extensive establishment of the kind in the world. Not that this country has by any means the monopoly of the manufacture of warlike engines, or that the great military nations of the Continent are much behind us in the application of machinery to war material, but that other nations have avoided a concentration of such establishments at one spot, the capture

of which or destruction by the enemy would paralyse the whole military force; while we, confiding in the immunities of our sea-girt isle, have collected all our Bellona's eggs into one basket.

The element of danger in this state of things has not escaped official recognition. A commission in 1860 recommended the establishment of a central arsenal and manufactory at Cannock Chase in Staffordshire, with plenty of the raw material and skilled labour close at hand, and this connected with a western arsenal at Runcorn. But these daring suggestions have never been carried out. And, after all, seeing that our warlike stores are mostly wanted for foreign expeditions, the advantage of having our arsenal placed upon our great river, and in immediate communication with all the executive departments of the administration, may be held to outweigh the undoubted risks referred to.

When the Dutch, in Charles the Second's time, sailed up the Thames and Medway, and burnt the ships in Chatham Dockyard, they were expected to pay a visit to Woolwich, and ships were sunk across the river channel to obstruct their progress. The damage then to be done by an enemy would have been trifling compared with what might be done now. But the development of torpedo systems has been so great of late years that it would be little short of madness on the part of a naval commander to bring his ships so far up an intricate channel, when once there had been the opportunity of planting it with torpedoes.

Anyhow, the approach to the nucleus of our national defences is not marked by lines of ramparts or redoubts, but by a strong body of the metropolitan police, far more effective, no doubt, against the secret foes, who, just now, are most to be dreaded. The bell has ceased its clangour, the workmen are at work, and the noise of engines and the hum of many wheels are to be heard. As we enter an immense machine-shed, where the primary work of bullet-making is going on upon a great scale, our guide leads the way to an inner room, on the door of which is marked, "Lead-squirting Room," as if there were beings within who amused themselves with Quilp-like malignity with squirting about the molten metal.

So far, the squirting seems to be of a harmless character. But on one side is a row of furnaces and cauldrons, which we may look upon with interest and awe.

Veritable witches-cauldrons are they, round about which the stern sisters, who ride on the battle-clouds and revel in human slaughter, might dance to ecstatic measure. For these cauldrons boil and bubble with the lead that shall hiss over the battle-fields of the future. The lives of brave men are bubbling in those fatal cauldrons.

The lead having been properly amalgamated, is now run into a sunken cylindrical holder, where, having been allowed to cool a little, so as to acquire a treacly consistency, an end is drawn through a funnel-shaped opening and pulled out in a bright, flexible rod, cooling as it goes—which some men now wind up on a big reel—a long, drawn, solid gas-pipe, only looking rather like silver than lead in its brightness. And we may follow this bright serpentine roll into the big bullet-factory beyond, where innumerable machines are waiting for it, to cut it into little quids, or chunks, bright still and innocent-looking, while, with here a bang and there a snip, the little innocent quid assumes the aspect of one of those bullets which peep so wickedly from the ends of the Martini cartridges.

In another shed thin sheets of brass are passing under the fingers of other machines, fed by boys and young men, and are punched and twisted into so many little brass cylinders, which are finished here and gauged there, and finally pass under the view of keen-eyed detectives, who, taking them up in batches of twenty or so, throw aside now and then a defective specimen, while the rest are shovelled into baskets and carried away. In another place are being made the capsules which close the cartridge with the strikers that are destined to explode the charge. The final meeting of brass case and leaden bullet with the villainous saltpetre that completes the charge is not effected within the walls of the Arsenal. Down there among the marshes are little detached sheds, where such more or less dangerous operations are conducted with all due regard for safety and privacy. Little accidents happen now and then, and once or twice in a lifetime such an explosion as that wild flight of war-rockets which scared all London, and gave Woolwich a notion of what a hostile attack might be like.

And in the way of brasswork, what marvelous finish and minuteness are there in the component parts of those fuses, destined for explosive missiles—time-fuses and percussion-fuses in all their varieties, with new varieties in process of being thought

out and elaborated, with all their delicate appliances. How far removed are all these from the primitive roughness of the early fuse—the plug of wood, with the morsel of slow-match inserted, cut long or short in the rough judgment of the artilleryman, and ignited by the flash of the discharge! But all our mechanical appliances have not got rid of the element of uncertainty in the fuse—dangerous even under careful management, as the recent sad accident at Shoeburyness conclusively shows.

From fuses we may move on to rifled shells, which have also reached an elaboration undreamed of by our earlier artillerymen. From the great furnaces molten iron runs out in a bright, glowing stream, with showers of hot, fiery stars flying in all directions—runs into the wheeled metal carriers, and is rolled off to the moulds, and poured into the elaborate cases, which squirm and squirt forth fire and flames in all directions. Often the shell is built up of various pieces—the interior filled with iron bullets in a resinous compôte suggestive of plum-jam, with a wooden cap to make all tight, and the conical point screwed upon the top of all. Before the case is filled, however, it is pitted at regular intervals, by the drilling-machine, with round holes, while another machine scoops out a groove round the bottom of each pit, and a third engine gives an inexorable thump to a copper stud, and drives it in with such force as to fill the inner groove, when the stud can be sooner torn asunder than plucked out. These are for the rifled guns, into the grooves of which the copper bolts are made to fit.

It is worth while here to pay a visit to the pattern-room of projectiles, where models of all the projectiles in use are carefully preserved in all the radiance of polish and lacquer; monster shells for the monster guns, dwindling down to the little steel-tipped spikes that do duty for the toy-like mountain guns. Here, indeed, are two lofty rooms filled with all kinds of death-dealing apparatus of the most elaborate structure, while in the lobby, by an unconscious satirical stroke, stand two primitive-looking tubes of simple construction, labelled as for "the preservation of life" in shipwrecks.

From the projectile-room, which somehow suggests the reptile-room of a great zoological collection, full of bright, shining things carefully wrapped up, so elegant and so deadly—from this we pass by a natural transition to the Royal Gun

Factory. Hitherto we have been engaged upon the Royal Laboratory—a strange name for such a manufactory of varied warlike stores—but the thing has grown up about the original laboratory, while the laboratory proper, the scene of experiments and tests, and general research into the properties of explosive compounds, occupies a neat, old-fashioned building all to itself, which is carefully closed against the outside world. Connected with the laboratory, too, are the torpedo works busily occupied with all such kinds of machines—torpedoes to be fired by electricity from fixed points; torpedoes to lie in wait in muddy channels, and explode at the first graze of a ship's keel; torpedoes to dart out fishlike upon a passing vessel. All the inventions which are destined probably to change the face of naval warfare, and render the ironclad war-ship as obsolete as the mailclad warrior, are here in course of manufacture, but, it may be said, on a very inadequate scale looking to the possible wants of the future.

But on the whole the Laboratory is a grand department, hardly to be equalled anywhere for beauty and nicety of machinery, with a potentiality of rapid production quite amazing. The rifle-shell factory, for instance, that we have just visited, with nearly a thousand machines of various kinds, can turn out somewhere about seven thousand projectiles of all kinds weekly, or not far from three hundred tons of metal. Then there are big sheds set apart for carpenters' work, to make all the innumerable cases and boxes required for the vast array of warlike stores. Here is box-making in its completest form, the rough plank cut, and shaved, and planed, and fitted, dovetailed, and joined together, and turned out strong, and smooth, and perfect, by a series of ingenious machines—over a hundred in number—of which the human artificers seem only the humble, obedient servants. Then there is a brass foundry supplying castings for fuses, taps, joints, and all kinds of minute appliances, and other minor departments exist, of which only the superintending officers could give a detailed account.

The regular staff which controls and manipulates all this complicated array of semi-intelligent machinery, consists of two artillery officers in chief command, forty clerks and writers, thirty masters, five hundred and sixty-nine artificers, and about eighteen hundred labourers. And the

importance of this great branch of the Arsenal may be judged from the Estimates, in which we shall find that out of about one million one hundred thousand pounds devoted to the manufacture of war material, nearly one-half—in round numbers, upwards of half a million—is expended upon the laboratory.

And now for the Gun Factory, the gates of which have been gaping for us while engaged upon this short statistical excursion—the great Gun Factory, which presents more striking and picturesque features than any other part of the establishment. Here are great masses of metal glowing with a dull red heat, which are gradually being beaten into shape under the thunderous blows of mighty steam-hammers. There is one of these hammers—the father of them all—that gives a crunch of thirty-tons power, and that will also gently crack the top of an egg without smashing it. In another place a score of men are clinging about a great beam, at the end of which is a more shapely mass of iron, in which the lineaments of some death-dealer of the future can be vaguely traced. The master-smith, with muffled face and hands, approaches the glowing monster. He lays a cutting-edge upon it—a cheese-cutter, with a long rod by way of handle, the steam-hammer gives a gentle tap, just to make sure that everything is plumb centre, and then, with a thump that shakes the earth, the knife is driven into the hot metal, as if it were so much cheese. A twist by the score of brawny arms, another tap, another thump, and the cheese-cutting goes on apace. Elsewhere a great breech-piece is slowly twirling in the lathe, while shavings of bright metal twirl from its polished side. Again, a steel tube is being bored and rifled, while in another place a great coil of wrought iron is being welded into one homogeneous mass.

To deal once more a little with statistics, the royal gun-factories consist of forges, smith's shop, rolling mills, pattern shop, brass and iron foundry, gun-boring mill, tool rooms, turneries, lighting room, field gun section engine repairing shop, with other branches. In these various departments are at work some six hundred machines, lathes, and boring machines, drilling machines, other machines for rifling, planing, slotting, shaping, milling, screwing, lopping, and wheel-cutting. Twenty weighing machines record and regulate the production; two circular saws



are at work, and two hundred and forty vices are waiting to grip anything they can get hold of. Then fifty-four furnaces continually do blow, with the aid of six blowing fans, while there is engine-power to the extent of seven hundred horses, and boiler-power to a much greater extent. And the factories can produce six thousand tons of guns, from the light mountain howitzer to be carried on the back of a mule, to the latest Woolwich Infant of eighty tons or more. At the head of the factories are two or more artillery officers, while the general staff consists of twenty-four clerks, draughtsmen, and timekeepers, twenty-four foremen, three hundred and eighty-six artificers, and five hundred and seventy-one labourers and boys; while as for total annual cost, the guns take in round numbers a quarter of a million from the annual estimates.

There is a skeleton, however, in the factory cupboard, a startling kind of memento that the best of guns, so considered, may fail at a pinch, in the shape of the burst gun of the Thunderer, which occupies a quiet but instructive corner; its jacket rent, its breechpiece shattered, and all its cunning coils and weldings torn asunder. A double charge rammed in, one on top of the other, say the authorities, in explanation of the burst. And yet similar guns have been treble charged, and have stood the shock without damage. Anyhow, the big gun problem seems not yet thoroughly solved, and the manufacture not to have reached the perfection of other branches of ordnance.

From the heat of the furnaces, the glow of the red-hot guns, and the crash of the steam-hammers, it is a pleasant relief to come out upon the wharves and quays, cumbered with great packages marked in great black letters—Principal Medical Officer, Principal Commissariat Officer, Commanding Officer Royal Artillery, Commanding Officer Royal Engineers, all labelled Suakin, while from the river beyond, gleaming yellow and turbid through the haze, rise the black funnels of the transports. Derricks and cranes are swinging their loads on high, and the cheery yo-heave-ho of the sailors mingles with the rattling of chains and blocks. A sort of Shetland pony in the way of a locomotive is prancing along the railway line, with a lot of railway-trucks in tow—full-sized trucks which are running on the broader gauge, and another lilliputian engine is rushing at us from a siding with its train of diminutive

waggons, shrieking to everybody to get out of the way.

And now we are in the domain of the storekeeping branch—an important one in its way—which deals with all the munitions of war, when they leave the various factories, and forwards them to their destinations, or keeps them in store for future needs. This is the department of Commissaries of Ordnance—who must not be confounded with Commissariat Commissaries—under whom is a considerable staff—between seven and eight hundred—of artificers, labourers, women, and girls. And beyond the Ordnance premises are the commissariat hay stores, where the compressed hay for the use of the expedition is being packed by hydraulic presses.

There is one quiet corner in the midst of all this bustle, and this is known as the cemetery, where the rude forefathers of the present race of guns sleep peacefully side by side, the relics of a less scientific age, when people were content to be knocked to pieces with less elaborate appliances. It is not an unmixed gain, perhaps, all this complicated machinery of war. The Arab, who starts on his campaign with a bag of dates and a goatskin filled with water flung over his saddle-bow, has certain advantages in the desert over Tom Atkins with the long train of equipages and stores of all kinds lumbering behind him. And some of these old guns that were burst in the fifties seem to carry us back half-way to the era of dates and water-skins. Those Crimean days, for instance, when half the army were still armed with Brown Bess, and bit the ends off their brown paper cartridges, and rammed down the bullets which were made obligingly loose to save trouble with iron ramrods, and wore pouches for percussion-caps, and blazed away into the blue without troubling themselves about sights front or back, or judging distances, and were knocked over with round shot fired from common cast-iron guns.

The last great department of the Arsenal is still to be visited, the Royal Carriage Works, which have nothing to do with those royal carriages which roll so smartly along with princes of the blood, and lords and ladies of the bedchamber; but of those more stern and sombre vehicles which show best amid the smoke and dust of battle.

Behold the ordnance on their carriage  
Gaping with fatal mouths.

And here we have forges and furnaces,

with steam-hammer foundries and saw-mills; machines of all kinds for forging, nut and bolt making, riveting, shearing, punching, cutting, planing; lathes, drills, circular saws, with many others whose purposes would only be known to the initiated. Here is one floor devoted entirely to wheels, the spokes, felloes, and tires, all of which are turned out by ingenious machines with a little human supervision. From the carriage-factory can be turned out each year sixty-five field batteries amply equipped, a hundred and eighty naval or garrison carriages, with slides or platforms, twenty-four turret-carriages, three hundred and sixty transport-carriages. The department is worked by a staff of two or three artillery officers, a civil manager and assistant, thirty-eight clerks and writers, thirty-eight masters and foremen, some eight hundred artificers, and four hundred and fifty labourers and boys.

Here, too, we meet with ambulance waggons, with their swing-cots for the badly wounded, carts for provender, carts for the field-train, general shandrydans, and ammunition-waggons. Here, too, we find the hospital fittings, down to the operating-table with its painful suggestions.

With all its numerous functions the carriage-factory is naturally one of the money-spending departments, and its normal cost is some thousands over the quarter of a million expended by the gun-factory. But the three departments, laboratory, gun, and carriage, account for the greater part of the cost of war materials—the remaining items of any consequence being the rifle manufactory at Enfield, another small arm establishment at Birmingham, and the gunpowder factory at Waltham, which, among them, spend annually a couple of hundred thousand, more or less, but generally more, by ten or twenty thousand pounds.

Among other curious sights of the Royal Arsenal are the stores for the equipment of cavalry and transport, with an array of all kinds of saddles—pack-saddles, draught harness, and all other sorts of horse-gear. Here stand stirrup-irons in columns reaching up to the roof, and the ceiling itself is composed of cavalry bits, whose embossed cheek-plates form a kind of fretted vaulting overhead. Bridle-chains and halters hang there, too, in their thousands, and there is an atmosphere of quietude and repose about these regions which is quite refresh-

ing after the roar and bustle of the factories.

For there the wheels are ever whirling, the furnaces ever roaring, the steam-hammers thumping night and day, without haste, but without rest. There is something fateful and imposing indeed in all this busy hum and whirl!—in the anxious pressure of never-resting toil. Night and day the great complicated machine is at work, making up for lost time, preparing for eventualities which are still hidden in the mist of futurity. If there are any rabbits still left underground in the old king's warren, even they might form an idea from the continual tramp and thump overhead that unquietude reigned among the human swarm above. With peace and prosperity the machine grinds slowly, one wheel after another is stopped, the furnaces grow cold, a sort of lassitude creeps over the place. Then some note of danger sounds, or come some tidings of alarm. The wheels begin again, whirling and whizzing as if weaving the web of fate. The hammer of Thor is heard, furnaces roar, and the bright metal leaps forth in continual jets of flame.

### WHICH OF THEM?

A STORY IN TEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

THE party assembled round the Woodlands breakfast-table next morning eyed each other with suppressed interest, intensified in Lucy by the sense that her own fate was wrapped up in the handkerchief which it was for her uncle, and not for her, to throw. The young men, of course, did not know that the lady was one of the fixtures that went with the property; but they all had a very good guess that to win the one would be the chief step towards winning the other. Yorkshire Alan did not care very much about either. Large-limbed and rather loosely built, with light brown hair and grey eyes, he carried about with him a breath from his native moors, and there seemed something incongruous in the idea of putting him into a merchant's office. Neither did he wish it. His head was full of Canada, and the great things he was going to do there; he would not have given a thank-you to be made master of all Gracechurch Street, and he did not want to be married. He grudged a month away from the home he was to leave next spring, and only his father's commands—and the partridges—had brought him to Surrey at all.

Alan from Kensington had very little anxiety. He was, when he chose, a ladies' man; he knew how to make himself agreeable to old fellows—one had only to call them "sir," agree with all they said, and listen to all their old stories; business would be a bore, but he could soon get it up from the clerks; and, as cause and motive of all this exertion, he was deeply in debt. If no lucky fate had come to his rescue, an era of retrenchment, shabbiness, perhaps even retirement to the Continent, must sooner or later have arrived. But now there would be no come-down in merging the close of a showy youth into the solid prosperity of mercantile life. With a handsome house in London, a place in the country, and a pretty and lady-like wife, a man of his style could keep any company he chose, and he chose to keep very good company, though he could not always get it. The old boy was going off the hooks very opportunely, and even if he delayed the final act, the report of Kensington's heirship would be nearly as satisfactory to his creditors as the fact. It ought not to be omitted that he was tall and dark, carried himself like a man who had been trained in athletics at Harrow and Cambridge, always knew the right thing to wear, and generally the right thing to say.

Alan from Brixton was much the least gentlemanly of the three. His dusky hair and pale complexion carried an everlasting reminder of the shop and the desk. He was undisguisedly eager to make a favourable impression, and miserably uncertain how to set about doing it. His commercially-trained mind appreciated to the full the greatness of his uncle. He bowed down and worshipped before the closed door of that shrine of the goddess Business in Gracechurch Street, into which his father had long ago striven in vain to obtain for him an entrance. To hold the key thereof as master and high priest was a height of glory, the very thought of which made him dizzy, and yet eager. To him alone of the cousins, his uncle's work would be no drawback from his uncle's fortune. But just now, while a glorious hope fluttered its bright wings before him, a miserable little worm was secretly gnawing at his heart. In other words, he was extremely uncomfortable at the prospect of the day's shooting. He had done his very best, though, to rise to the occasion. He had fitted himself out from top to toe at the right shop in the Strand, and now appeared in a heather-

coloured shooting-suit, which shouted its newness from every crease—his thin legs encased in thick ribbed stockings, calculated to protect them against the chill blasts of early September and the fierce assaults of turnip-leaves. He had acquainted himself with the use of arms by diligent practice at a shooting-gallery every evening since he received his uncle's invitation, and his success had been such that he thought he need not quail before any bird or any keeper. But nevertheless he did quail.

Breakfast was rapidly dispatched, and soon the four Alan Marstons were crunching the crisp stubble under their feet, brushing through the yellowing turnips, and breathing the frost-chilled, sun-warmed air of a perfect autumn morning.

The birds sprang up into the wind, the blue puffs of smoke melted one after the other into the mild haze of the distance. The sport was good; the dogs were better than could have been expected on the First; and, in due time, the lunch was excellent.

But the enjoyment had by no means been equally distributed when that period of repose arrived.

Very soon after the start, a covey rose within easy shot of Mr. Marston. He threw up his gun and fired instantly, but missed them. Not a bird fell. Yorkshire Alan, who was next to him, and had noticed a slight trembling of his hand when loading, was not surprised; but the old man was.

"Missed them!" he said disconsolately. "And what a shot! Don't know how I could have done it. Am I breaking up so soon?"

"Not a bit, sir," returned old Willy, the head-keeper. "It was that bit of a branch coming down of a sudden between you and them; it put you out. It would have put out anybody."

"Oh, a branch, was it?" repeated Mr. Marston vaguely, puzzled, but somewhat comforted.

Alan and the keeper interchanged glances, and Alan took his part. He kept thenceforward close behind his uncle, and fired as nearly as possible at the same time. In the resulting confusion as to the ownership of the shot birds, Mr. Marston was easily satisfied that he had killed more than his share, and he was perfectly happy.

Kensington went striding along by himself, paying very little attention to what anyone else was doing, and acquitting

himself very well. He highly approved of the way in which his uncle had worked up the partridges, and resolved that when he was master, he would retain the keepers, and stock the plantations with pheasants.

But sore were the tribulations of him of Brixton. He walked along, clutching his gun with an air of stern determination, and keeping his eye on Kensington, in order to do exactly as he did. Up went Kensington's gun, and up went Brixton's; bang went the one, and bang went the other; a partridge fell fluttering to the earth, and two grains of shot riddled Kensington's hat. He looked round with an angry word and saw Brixton staring up into the sky, and then all around, to see what he had shot.

"You hit black game that time," he remarked coolly. "Next time you'll oblige me by aiming at my hat, instead of my birds; it will be safer, and my life is not insured."

"I'm sure I'm very sorry," stammered the unfortunate sportsman, smothered in confusion.

"You'd better show Mr. Marston the way about, Hopkins," Kensington observed to the under-keeper; "he hasn't been out before."

"Yes, sir," rejoined Hopkins. "You see, sir," he went on, addressing Brixton, "you mustn't fire at the other gentleman's birds; you and me'll go along the other side of this field, and whatever gets up you can go at without interfering with him. There!"

Whiz! Whirr! Scud!

"Where—where?" gasped Brixton, putting up his gun slowly, and looking in every direction but the right one.

"In the next county now, sir, unless one of the other gentlemen has got them. There go shots! I'll bet old master hasn't let them pass. You must keep your eyes better peeled next time, sir."

Brixton now kept a sharp look-out, turning his head from side to side, like a demented sparrow, and was rewarded by being the first to see a bird fly over the hedge into his field, a little way in front of him. He fired, and, strange to say, the bird fell. Any jury of its peers would certainly have brought in a verdict of contributory negligence. However, Brixton had incontestably shot something, and Hopkins went to pick it up.

"These things only want a little practice," observed the sportsman with mild elation, putting down his gun and rubbing his hand, which was rather cramped. "I was sure I should soon get into the way of it."

Hopkins picked up the booty and burst into an undisguised guffaw.

"It's a crow, Mr. Marston! I beg your pardon, sir, but I can't help it. What'll the master say to going out partridge-shooting and bringing home nothing but an old crow?" And he roared again.

"There—there," said Brixton, rather cross; "that's enough about it. I fired in a hurry and didn't wait to look. Throw the thing into the ditch. I dare say my uncle doesn't want such vermin about his farm."

"No, sir," said Hopkins, subduing his emotion; "but he don't need to get down gentlemen from London to shoot them."

"Well, let it alone. Here, you may as well carry this gun a bit; I'm not very well to-day, and it tires me. And if you see a partridge you may as well shoot it, you know."

Hopkins responded with a respectful affirmative as one of Brixton's few half-sovereigns changed hands; and thus it came to pass that Brixton did not present himself empty-handed when Lucy and luncheon appeared together, although the crow reposed in a neglected grave.

After luncheon, Kensington shot worse, and Yorkshire rather better; for the latter knew what the former did not—how very little wine it takes to make a man shoot behind his birds, and, having to sustain the reputation of two, he did his very best. Nevertheless, the bag was not so full as it would have been if Mr. Marston had hit more than once in five times. But he came home well satisfied with himself, and not ill-satisfied with his nephews.

"Did you have a good day, uncle?" enquired Lucy, meeting them at the door.

"A capital day, my dear—as good as ever I had in my life. I began badly, but I soon warmed to my work, and then I think the old man showed the young ones a thing or two. Here are forty-five brace, and a couple of hares—not so bad for four guns, considering. Kensington here is a capital shot, fourteen brace fell to his gun; and your cousin from Yorkshire knows what he's about, though somehow he didn't seem to have luck to-day. Too near my old Westley Richards—eh, my boy?"

"I can't say that I distinguished myself anyhow, sir," answered the young man gaily.

"And how did you get on?" asked Lucy, turning to Brixton.

"Ah, well, I'm not much used to this sort of thing, Miss Lucy. Still, I did manage to hit something."

A queer sort of gulp was heard, and Hopkins's life seemed in imminent danger from a sudden and violent fit of coughing.

"Yes," added his uncle, "he didn't do at all badly for a beginner. Two brace and a half were his bag, and if he can do that on his first day out, he'll be a crack shot yet."

The sportsmen went to their rooms, and Lucy meditatively surveyed the pile of ruffled feathers and hanging heads, with a sentiment of sorrow for the pretty little lives cut short, and a calculation of how many ought to be kept for use in the house, and how many sent away as presents.

"I wonder, Willy," she said suddenly, "that Mr. Marston from Yorkshire didn't do better. He looks like a man who ought to be able to shoot."

"Bless you, so he can, miss, and first-rate at that. Fact is, him and me's playing a little game. Master, he warn't himself, and he missed his first bird—as easy a shot as ever you see. You could have hit it yourself, miss." Lucy laughed, and shook her head. "And I persuaded him it was a falling branch put him out, and then I give young Mr. Marston the tip, and he kept close by the old gentleman, and fired when he did, and down went the birds like drops of rain. I don't believe he missed three times all day; and master, he thought he'd killed them nearly all himself, miss. He was as pleased as Punch, but he gave the young gentleman one every now and then. I couldn't but laugh a little to myself, miss; but for all that, I can't bear to see him breaking up."

"It was very nice of my cousin," said Lucy tremulously. "Mind you never let my uncle know, though, or that would spoil it all."

Willy swore secrecy, and retired to discuss with Hopkins the events of the day, of which they two between them knew more than anyone else. For in the confusion of white lies that clustered round the bag, if each victim had claimed to know its slaughterer, the keepers alone could have answered its plaintive question—Which of them?

#### CHAPTER IV.

THE month of September drew towards an end, and Mr. Marston had given no sign of his choice. The young men had made themselves at home at Woodlands in their several ways, and had got on fairly well together. Their uncle had decidedly gone down the hill, though not rapidly,

and had soon given up the shooting; but he was always eager that they should shoot over his fields or his neighbours', and liked hearing them describe and praise their sport. It often seemed as if he liked Yorkshire Alan best; he took a pleasure in the young fellow's simplicity and manliness, and liked to make him talk about Yorkshire, and the brother of whom he had seen so little since the currents of life had carried them apart. Brixton, however, soon made himself useful in writing the business letters for which Lucy's feminine caligraphy disqualified her; and gradually his uncle seemed to look to him naturally for assistance, and to trust him more and more in the task of putting his affairs into order. Brixton already felt himself his successor; and in the meantime he was saved many a painful—and expensive—day's shooting, by the plea that he was wanted—or likely to be wanted—in the study. Kensington had carved out no special niche for himself, but he made himself agreeable all round; he made conversation for his uncle, read poetry and gave drawing-lessons to Lucy, and even instructed Brixton in the art of bringing down partridges, instead of crows. It never for a moment occurred to him that he could be unsuccessful, but it did sometimes occur to him that his rate of progress was not commensurate with efforts to please of which he was rather ashamed. Something of this he expressed one morning to his valet and partial confidant, who had excellent reasons of his own for being profoundly interested in his master's success.

"This is slow work, Horton, and I'm getting sick of it."

"It is dull down here in the country, sir; I feel it so myself," responded Horton.

"Fish! I don't mean that. I mean it's time to get something settled. Here we are within a week of October, and as soon as I go back to town those beasts of duns will be on me like a swarm of flies. I must bring things to a point."

"Do you generally strike when your fish is light-hooked, sir; and what happens when you do?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that the old gentleman is one that won't be driven, and the more you try to make him say that you're his choice, the more likely he is to throw you out of it altogether."

"I can't say that I have the least fear of such a contingency, Horton," returned Kensington stiffly. "Besides, I should

not think of speaking to him about his property. But I intend to propose to Miss Scott, and I imagine she carries most of it in her pocket."

"You'll put all the fat in the fire, sir, if you do," the valet replied with energy. "He means to give her away, not to let her give herself. There's one going to spoil himself at that game already. You stay still and let him do it."

"What, that lout from Yorkshire?"

"Just him, sir. Isn't he always round about with Miss Scott, helping her in the garden, taking walks in the lanes? Oh, a great deal more goes on than you see. Just you watch how they look at each other."

"The scoundrel! The more reason I should cut him out."

"It's gone too far, sir. You see here. The Yorkshireman's gone in for the lady, and made love to her without asking leave; that'll drive your uncle mad, when he knows it, which we'll attend to. Then there's the clerk from Brixton; he's made up to the uncle, and let the lady alone; that disgusts her, and she'll hardly let him come near her. Wait till Mr. Marston throws the Yorkshireman out of the house, and Miss Scott vows she won't marry the clerk. Then you step in, after making yourself pleasant to both and disagreeable to neither, and they both settle down on you."

"Very fine; but it's just as likely that the girl will run away with the Yorkshireman, and my uncle leave everything to the clerk, if I let it all slip through my fingers. No; I shall settle it with her at once, and then she'll know how to manage my uncle."

"You fool!" observed the servant as the master departed.

Breakfast was not quite ready, and Lucy, in hat and shawl, was visible at the end of a garden-walk. Kensington seized his opportunity, and found her cutting Gloire de Dijon roses. Instantly, of course, he broke out:

"Ah, one rose,  
One rose, but one, by those fair fingers culled,  
Were worth a hundred kisses pressed on lips  
Less exquisite than thine."

"I don't see that you are called upon to choose," returned Lucy, laughing.

"I am called upon to supplicate, though. Won't you give me the rose?"

"What, one of the very last on the bush! I should think not. But if you want something for your button-hole, you may cut a little red one off that bush near the breakfast-room window."

"I do not care for roses unless you give them to me, nor for anything else that does not come through your sweet hands."

"What, nothing?"

Lucy glanced a whimsical interrogation at him, but he took no notice.

"Lucy, it is not possible that you should not have guessed what I feel for you. I have held back as long as possible, fearing that you would think our acquaintance too short; but now I can keep silence no longer. May I not speak?"

Lucy arranged her roses with elaborate care, and left it to his choice.

"You have altered the world for me; you have shown me a new life. I have seen many beautiful women before, but never one who drew me irresistibly, by her purity and sweetness, towards all my higher aspirations, and impelled me to realise them in a happy home-life by her side. Lucy, you alone can make me all I might be. I can make you no better than you are, for that is impossible; but I can put you on a pedestal, where you will shine as a star, and the world will worship you."

"Sitting on a lamp-post! Thank you, cousin."

"Lucy, I am not joking. Tell me that you will be my wife."

"That is serious, certainly. Seriously, then, I can give you no answer. You must speak to my uncle."

"And if he consents, you will?"

"I don't say that; but, if he doesn't consent, I won't."

"But I may tell him that you can love me?"

"Certainly not. Tell him what you choose about yourself, and I will tell him what I choose about myself."

"Then you send me away without one word of encouragement? How can I have the courage to go to him?"

Lucy hesitated a moment; then a wicked gleam came into her eyes. She picked out a rosebud from her bunch, and tossed it to him. He fastened it triumphantly in his coat as the breakfast-bell rang, and Yorkshire Alan glowered at it suspiciously all the morning. I fear Miss Lucy was a bit of a flirt.

She was a forgetful damsel, also; for that evening, when she said good-night, she left her work lying about untidily in the drawing-room. Now, she was usually very orderly in her habits, and therefore it was necessary for her peace of mind that she should come back in about half an hour to look for it. When she did, her uncle

was gone to bed, Kensington and Brixton were in the billiard-room, and Yorkshire sat alone finishing a novel in the drawing-room. It is possible that these circumstances were not all purely accidental, nor impossible to foresee.

Yorkshire threw down his book and caught her in his arms.

"At last, my darling!"

"Oh, Alan, don't!"

"Why not, my own love?"

"I ought not, while uncle does not know."

"I'm ready to tell him to-morrow. I'll tell him to-night, if he isn't in bed."

He made a movement to the door, but Lucy caught his arm.

"Don't be so silly! Leave that to Kensington."

"What! has he—?"

Lucy nodded.

"Did you know he was going to?"

"I told him he must."

"You did? Then that was what the rose meant! Oh, Lucy, I would not have believed it!"

"Why not?" said Lucy. "I meant no harm, and I said nothing that was not true. I wanted to get him out of our way; he asked me to be his wife, and I told him I couldn't without uncle's consent, and I wouldn't say that I would, even with it. So he went and spoke to uncle this afternoon; and of course uncle was in a rage at his having spoken to me, and now he has not a chance. He won't interfere with you any more, and I think you ought to be pleased."

"So I am; only I wish he hadn't your rose."

"It isn't an autograph; and, besides, he won't keep it. He isn't of the sentimental sort, though he gets it up very well. All he wants is the money."

"And all I want is you. Kensington may have blundered, but he did the straightforward thing; let me do it too."

"Then you would offend uncle mortally. Don't you see, Alan—it seems horrid to say it—but he does enjoy keeping you three in suspense, as he thinks, waiting to see what he will do. He likes to feel the power that he has, and he won't give it up in a hurry."

"And I don't want him to think that I am hanging round waiting for a chance to step into his shoes. All I want is your promise to come out to me when I have made a home in Canada; then I will tell him we are engaged, and he may leave his

money to Kensington and Brixton, and welcome."

"You'll insult him. Do you suppose he does not think his beloved business, which he made himself, worth twice as much as any girl?"

"If he knows no better than that, it is time I taught him. I don't want his business, and I shall tell him so."

"Then you had better tell him that you don't want me, for he would never let you have the one without the other."

"But, Lucy, you are not a slave. Give me your word, my sweet one, and then it does not matter what he says. I don't want you to leave him now, so what need of his consent?"

"Oh, Alan, I have never disobeyed uncle. I could not now, when he is dying."

"Then will you marry Brixton, if he leaves you to him in his will?"

"Never, never—nor anyone but you, Alan. But I can't promise anything more; we must wait, we must be patient; give uncle his own way, and it will all come right. He must see that you are the best."

All Yorkshire's entreaties and almost anger could get no more out of her; she absolutely did not know how to resist her uncle. Nevertheless, it was evident that—on one side at least—some progress had been made towards deciding the great question—Which of them?

## LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNN," ETC., ETC.

### CHAPTER XL.

EDIE had her "long and serious" illness, but, in spite of the vicar's prophecy, it may be questioned whether it would have occurred just then, had not a rather severe form of typhoid fever broken out in the village. Edie, scorning to discontinue her ministrations ("Just when they were most needed," as she explained to Mr. Rumsey), and not being quite up to her usual standard of health, was naturally one of the first to take the infection.

It ran its usual course, marked by an immense amount of kindly solicitude from Edie's friends and neighbours, rich and poor; for Edie, in spite of her many and serious faults of character, had somehow a knack of winning hearts which more faultless persons occasionally lack.

The squire's anxiety over his little daughter was at once ludicrous and pathetic.

He did his best to retard her recovery—as the doctor was at length compelled to inform him—by sitting all day long at her bedside holding her hand and imploring her to get well. And when a change for the better had evidently set in, he nearly made the nurse jump out of her bib and apron by suggesting that he should be there and then allowed to carry Edie downstairs and deposit her on the sofa in the library, for he was confident she would get round fifty times as quickly in the lighter, brighter room below, with the dogs and other signs of life about her.

The “getting round,” after all, proved to be the longest and most wearisome part of Edie’s illness. Without any apparent reason for weakness or languor, somehow both continued to hold sway over her. When by rights she ought to have been going cheerily about once more, feeding her birds, rubbing Coquette’s nose, scolding Janet, or laughing at the vicar’s “jokes,” she was instead lying limply in an easy-chair in her own room, or shivering in a big shawl on a sofa beside a blazing fire.

The old doctor grew puzzled, and shook his head at her. Edie shook her head at herself—mentally, and not having an ounce of sentimental compassion for herself in her whole composition, grew furious and irritable by turns.

“Why don’t I get well—why can’t I—what is there to prevent me?” she would say a hundred times a day to Janet or anybody else who did not dare to impose silence upon her. Then to herself she would add: “I know it can’t be because I’m grieving after Phil, because long ago, before I was taken ill, I made up my mind to leave off caring two straws for him.”

Phil had not been informed of Edie’s illness. Mr. Fairfax, so long as the fever lasted, had been far too anxious for his little daughter to have a thought for anyone or anything else in his mind; and Colonel Wickham had not felt inclined to do so ever since, about a day or so before Edie fell ill, he had had a slip of a note from Phil announcing the fact of his engagement to Miss Yorke.

The announcement fairly took the Colonel’s breath away. When his amazement subsided, indignation took its place.

“How dared he,” he stormed to himself, as he walked hurriedly backwards and forwards in Blue-book Parlour, “rush from the arms of one girl into those of another! How could he—didn’t he know true gold from false, diamonds from cut glass?”

Phil had no answer to his note—never a line civil or savage. But it may be questioned whether, absorbed as he was in his delirium of passion, he so much as noted the fact.

After Edie had turned the corner of her fever, and ought to have been making strides towards recovery, the Squire began to think of Phil.

“Tell you what, Edie,” he said blandly, unconscious of the old wounds he was probing, “I believe you’d get well as fast again if you had Master Phil down here to squabble with. I shall just send him a line in spite of your orders—”

“You’ll do nothing of the sort, papa!” exclaimed Edie vehemently. “When will you understand—why won’t you understand that Phil and I grew sick and tired of each other, and are nothing more than friends now? Do you hear, papa—you are not to write!”

And Edie grew so peremptory and excited over the matter, that the Squire was fain to promise that he “wouldn’t write to Phil; there, not without your permission, dear—there—never again, if you don’t wish it. There, will that do?”

But when Colonel Wickham called about half an hour afterwards to see Edie, her excitement and peremptoriness had vanished, and she was lying back on her sofa with her wraps about her, looking very white and weary.

One hand was pressed across her eyes as though her head were aching.

“Papa always tires me,” she said complainingly. “Oh, why can’t I get well! I’m sure I’ve tried hard enough!”

Colonel Wickham looked at her anxiously. “You ought to have a change of scene, Edie,” he began.

Edie let her hand fall from her eyes.

“Oh, it isn’t that—but I do feel so worried, so bothered—papa is always teasing me about—” Here she broke off abruptly, made a huge effort, and brought out the rest of her sentence in a lump: “About Phil, and he won’t understand everything is at an end between us.”

“He must be made to understand,” said Colonel Wickham gravely, thinking of Phil’s slip of a note, and how the news it contained could be best broken to Edie before a rougher tongue could find opportunity to blurt it out.

“I am always trying to make him,” said Edie wearily. “The end will be that I shall have to marry someone else, to prove to him I don’t mean to marry Phil.”



Poor child! She did not look much like marrying anybody, with that white, tired look on her face, and her invalid wraps muffling her right up to the chin.

"Don't do anything in a hurry, Edie! It's this making haste over things that causes half the troubles in life," said the Colonel, still with Phil's slip of a note in his mind.

But Edie was just then inclined to be in a hurry, and nothing short of a padlock would have kept her next words in. A sudden thought had come to her—a thought which, to say truth, had more than once flitted in and out of her brain.

"I do so wish, Colonel Wickham," she said, speaking very fast, but withal without the slightest shade of embarrassment, "you would let me be engaged to you; it would put an end to such a lot of bothertation and worry—don't you see?"

It was said boldly, innocently, with the sweet unconsciousness of a child at a dinner-table, who will make the faces of all the "grown-ups" crimson with his naïve breaking of the seals of forbidden subjects.

Colonel Wickham gave a great start. Then he stood staring at her fixedly. Here, indeed, was an answer, and an effectual one, to the question wherewith he had been torturing himself off and on ever since his interview with Phil in London. Not the biggest coxcomb in the world could by any amount of twisting or turning of Edie's voice, look, manner, have got the faintest suspicion of love-making out of them.

His face grew long and troubled, but somehow words would not come to his lips.

Edie began to feel a little uncomfortable, and tried to make apologies.

"I'm so sorry if I've made you wretched; I'm always saying things I oughtn't to say. Please don't think any more about it. Of course I didn't mean anything more than being engaged. Nothing else for a moment came into my mind—the idea of marrying you, of course, would be ridiculous."

It was all said with that fine brutal frankness in which girls under twenty are adepts.

Colonel Wickham found his voice.

"I understood your meaning thoroughly, my child. It was easy enough to understand," he said sadly. "It was easy enough to understand, not a doubt; but, nevertheless, the sweet delusion he had let into his heart was dying hard.

Edie brightened again.

"Yes; I felt sure you would understand what I meant. You see it would stop all papa's teasing, and—and——" Here she hesitated, broke off, mentally told herself she was a little simpleton for not being able to mention Phil's name, finally got together every atom of will she possessed and brought out the sentence: "And it would make Phil feel as free as air."

Colonel Wickham grew graver and graver.

"I am afraid he has felt free as air for some time past, Edie—ever since your letter of dismissal at the beginning of the year," he said.

Edie looked up sharply.

"Is he going to be married?" she asked, catching at his meaning swift as a bird at its prey.

There was no retreating now from his words, so he thought it best to tell her the truth right out.

"Some time ago I heard from him that he was engaged to be married," he answered.

"To Ellinor Yorke?" in the same swift tone as before.

"Yes, to Ellinor Yorke. But what made you think of her, Edie?"

Edie made no reply. She leaned as far back among her pillows as the sofa-arm would let her, closed her eyes, and said in a weak, quiet voice:

"I'm so tired; I think I should like to go to sleep for a little while.

Colonel Wickham rose instantly.

"I'll ring for Janet to come and sit with you," he said, then paused for a moment, looking down on her pityingly, wonderingly, heart-brokenly. Ghosts of "twenty years ago" began to rise up and crowd about him. The mists of memory lifted for an instant from off a sunny little stretch of landscape—ah me, now so distant and dim! How like the dead love she looked as she lay back with her eyes closed, and that sweet soft colour coming and going! How he yearned to comfort her, to give back to her the happiness which, it seemed to him, with foolish hands she had put away from herself!

A sudden impulse moved him. He went close to her side, took her hand in his, and bent low over her.

"Edie," he said earnestly, "tell me the whole story of your broken engagement with Phil. Trust me with it. It can't do any harm to tell it out now."

Edie opened her eyes.

"I thought you had gone," she said wearily. "Oh, do let me go to sleep." Then her eyes closed again.

He made one step towards the door.

"Colonel Wickham!" she called softly, and he was back by her side in a moment; "will you mind letting us be engaged to each other—for a time, that is? It will save such a lot of worry and botheration."

"So much cross-questioning from papa—put a stop to all his volleys of indignation against Phil—silence all the old maids in Stanham with their imitation pity, and hints about willow-trees," she would have said had she undertaken to paraphrase her words.

"If you wish it, Edie—if you wish it," answered the Colonel slowly and hesitatingly.

"And—and, Colonel Wickham——"

"Yes, Edie."

"You won't think for a moment, will you, that I've been making love to you this morning—you'll promise me that?"

Colonel Wickham's words came hotly enough now.

"Do you suppose for an instant, child, I should call this—this love-making!" he cried vehemently. "I should as soon dream of scenting those roses on your wall-paper and calling it a flower-garden!"

Surely, never since the days of Tantalus had thirsty soul such a full and impossible cup held so near to his dry lips.

#### CHAPTER XLII.

THERE are soldiers and soldiers. Soldiers who content themselves with remaining in the place assigned them and doing a fair amount of execution among the enemy; there are others who must be for ever rushing to the front and getting as many scars as possible. Edie's temperament was of the latter order. In spite of head-aching, heart-aching, sickness of mind, lassitude of body, she herself informed her father of two important events—viz, her own engagement to Colonel Wickham, and Phil's engagement to Ellinor Yorke. And that in a perfectly natural tone of voice, without a quiver of lip or of eyelid.

"Now, don't storm, dear," she said, when she had communicated the first startling piece of intelligence; "you know I was always fond of old, old gentlemen—right down old, without any nonsense about them—like you, and Colonel Wickham, and dear Mr. Rumsey. I always had a great contempt for boys—and you know

they are all boys under thirty. I've heard you say so a hundred times over."

And when she had communicated the second astounding piece of news, she ran ahead in grand, inconsequential fashion, somewhat as follows:

"Now, papa, I'm sure you're delighted at Ellinor's good fortune—no, Phil's good fortune, I suppose I ought to say. And I'm sure you ought to be infinitely—yes, infinitely obliged to Phil for preventing you from making yourself ridiculous over Ellinor, for I tremble to think what might have been the consequence if you had gone up to London, and if you had met Ellinor, as I dare say you would. You know how you made everyone talk about you last year when she stayed in the house."

When the Squire had got over his first astonishment he was heard to mutter something to the effect that "If he had made himself ridiculous, he had a daughter to keep him in countenance, at any rate!"

"Now that's sheer nonsense, papa," said Edie, her weak voice and white face oddly at variance with her peremptoriness of word and manner. "I wish you could be made to understand the difference there is in every way between my getting engaged to an old, old man, and you marrying a young girl! But there, of course, if you won't see things in a right light, I can't make you! Oh, dear, I'm so tired!" and then she leaned back again on her pillows and closed her eyes as though in sleep.

It, however, took the Squire a good long time before he could, as Edie had phrased it, see things in a right light—i.e., of course in the light in which his little daughter chose to see them. For days he went about the house telling everybody that the world was upside down, topsy-turviness the order of the day, that soon he supposed the birds would take to shooting the men, the foxes to hunt the hounds, and then he supposed he would begin to understand things.

He addressed Colonel Wickham on the matter. At first incredulously:

"Can't believe it, Wickham. You my son-in-law! Am I going mad or are you, or is Edie? Or are we all three of us on our way to a lunatic asylum? It seems to me that Edie means to give none of us any rest till we're landed safe in Bedlam." Then testily: "Why you couldn't let my little girl alone, Wickham, and go in for a widow—well, say fifteen years nearer your own age, I can't imagine! You know I demurred to Phil's hot-headed haste to get

married. Well, I tell you candidly I sha'n't hand Edie over to you in a hurry. Ten years' time will be quite soon enough for her to think of marrying, though"—this added with a spice of malice—"a little late in the day I take it for you." Then resignedly: "Well, it's a confoundedly queer business from beginning to end, but suppose I shall do no good by making a fuss over it. What is to be will be. Come and have a smoke, Wickham, and I'll explain to you my new plan for stable ventilation. Those wretched things I invested in last year have turned out an utter failure."

It may be remarked in passing that while the Squire's "teasy" mood lasted, he discharged his magisterial duties with a rigour new to him. Poachers had a sorry time of it, and a good many juvenile offenders were whipped instead of being let off with a reprimand as heretofore.

But to all these moods Colonel Wickham's answers were slow and short. He differed as little as possible from his old friend; he said as little as possible. Truth to tell, he had so much to say to himself, he had but few words or ideas to bestow on the outside world. His moods, like the Squire's, would vary. Sometimes he would say to himself, "You are but keeping the door open for Phil, so that if his new love discards him, he may wander back to his old love once more." At others, he would sit dreaming over his study-fire, conjuring up fancies less of what was than of what might be in the years to come. True, he could not shut his eyes to the notion that Edie had no love (of the right sort) to give him. He had no doubt in his own mind that the explanation of the little maiden's erratic conduct lay in the fact that Ellinor had won Phil's heart away from her. She had discovered it, and out of pride had dismissed Phil. But, nevertheless, in spite of all this, it might be that time would by-and-by heal her heart-soreness, and she would find that there were still things in life left her worth having and enjoying; that though, as it were, the warm, golden sunlight had been altogether withdrawn from her, the fire which he, Colonel Wickham, might be able to kindle could be yet something of a substitute.

In the reality of Phil's devotion to

Ellinor he could scarcely bring himself to believe.

"She has befooled him, and if she really intends it, will, of course, marry him, but it is a surprisingly unambitious marriage for one of her temperament to make," he decided. Then there arose a sudden strong wish in his mind to see Phil and have one more talk with him before circumstances should render all such talks futile. "If I could see them together, those two, I should know in a moment how far things have gone, and whether there is a chance of bringing him back to his senses," he reasoned.

Edie, sending for him to convey the news that she had suddenly made up her mind that a trip to the seaside—"a nice, warm, sheltered place like Bournemouth would do wonders for her, and soon set her up again," was a little surprised by the intimation that he, too, had a trip in contemplation—a week or so in London; there were one or two things requiring his presence.

It was never any use with Edie to wrap up intentions in pretext or phrases, however plausible they might be.

She knew, all in a moment, exactly why Colonel Wickham was going to London, and what he meant to do when he got there.

"You'll see Phil, of course," she said, trying hard to make her voice as dry and as tuneless as that of the log that was crackling on the hearth, "and you'll tell him that I congratulate him with all my heart and wish him every happiness."

"I will, Edie."

"And I suppose," this added a little slowly, a little drearly, "I ought to send a message of congratulation to Ellinor too, but I can't—no, not yet. I can't wish her long life and happiness yet—I may forgive her some day, but not now."

Which last phrase, added softly—so little above her breath, indeed, that the Colonel only just heard it—confirmed him in his theory as to the true cause of little Edie's broken engagement.

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A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

## CHARLES DICKENS

No. 855. NEW SERIES. SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 1885. PRICE TWOPENCE.

### "THE FLOWER OF DOOM;"

OR, THE CONSPIRATOR.

A SHORT SERIAL STORY.

By MISS BETHAM-EDWARDS,

Author of "Kitty," "Love and Mirage," etc., etc.

#### CHAPTER IX. THE SHADOW DEEPENS.

CHEERY sunshine, and the bustle of the day, quite restored Marion's spirits, and she begged Bernarda, with tears in her eyes, not to send her away.

"Let Kitty come for a day or two," she entreated. "I am so much alone in the evenings now. You used to have me up for a little singing every night, till"—she stopped short, withholding the remainder of the sentence on her lips—"till Mr. Edgeworth began to come"—"till winter set in," she got out at last.

Bernarda frowned, understanding her meaning full well, and, after a moment's thought, consented. Marion was not the only person she had to consider. Her school must be thought of. For the sake of her apprentices, one and all, the compromising fact of Edgeworth's presence must be got rid of. She would tell him to come no more.

When alone, she took out her pocket-diary, and was shocked to find how often she had allowed him to come of late. Two months had elapsed since that first intrusion on her solitude, and now she noted as she conned her journal, that for exactly four weeks he had kept to the allotted day and hour. During the fifth week he had come twice—for half an hour's chat only, it was true, yet he had come. During the sixth, he had dropped in, as he called it, every other day. Within the last eight days, his visits numbered seven.

Bernarda had not a particle of feminine vanity in her composition. Setting senti-

ment entirely on one side, she could easily understand the recreation such intercourse afforded a man in Edgeworth's position. Any other agreeable, sympathetic woman living alone, and thus able to devote her leisure to his confidences, would have attracted him in the same way. Men, no more than women, can exist without homely humdrum friendships, a domestic audience, a fireside oracle. She did not, therefore, plume herself upon gaining any extraordinary influence over him from day to day. To do him some good was within the limits of rational hope. She dared not aspire to become his conscience. Crimsoning with vexation as the tell-tale diary was put back in its place, she could hardly understand her imprudence in the matter of these visits. The head of an accredited school, the mistress of a score and odd girl-apprentices, was bound to show more circumspection. That day, indeed, he did not come, but on the next he presented himself earlier than usual. The street-door had hardly closed upon the last apprentice, and Bernarda was closeted with a client when he arrived. Ten minutes elapsed before she could join him. He put down his hat at the sight of her with an air of relief.

"At last!" he exclaimed impatiently. "I thought your æsthetic patron would never take his departure. And I am pushed for time to-day," he added jealously, and with a touch of ill-humour.

"Why did you come then?" asked Bernarda coolly.

She had entered with a handful of papers, and was now putting them away.

"Why did I come?" he reiterated in a tart voice, and with meeting brows. "Why should I come, except to see you?"

She had spoken without looking up. She was a very orderly person, and could not

sit down now comfortably to talk to him till she had disposed of her papers—a cheque to be put in one drawer of her *escritoire*, a list of instructions in another, a receipt in a third, and so on. She did not pay any attention to his rebuke, but when her task was done, quitted her desk, and sat down beside him.

"I am glad you did come to-day," she began. Then glancing up, not feeling sure if her moment were opportune, yet determined to get out at once a piece of intelligence so obnoxious to him, she added: "And it is not because I have pleasant news for you. Alas! quite the contrary. My dear Edgeworth, you must leave off coming to see me. Your movements are dogged. There are spies set upon this house." She then repeated, word for word, Marion's statement, emphasising her own implicit reliance on the girl's good faith. The singing-bird belonged to the category of women who scream. A mouse scared her. She was brimful of girlish fancifulness, sentiment, and romance. But she invariably spoke the truth, or what she believed to be the truth. And she was no mystic or visionary; her mind, as much as she had of mind, was sane and poised.

Then, having delivered herself of her disagreeable duty, Bernarda studied Edgeworth's face. Handsome as it was, it was no delightful subject for contemplation just then. Dark passions betrayed themselves in every line, yet she felt that something darker lay behind. His silence, moreover, seemed ominous. He was wont to speak out promptly, impetuously, only too ready with thoughts and words always, often pulling himself up only just in time on the brink of some imprudent disclosure. He now sat like a man fairly checkmated, turning from red to pale, with never a syllable at command.

Bernarda felt sorry for him just then. She had no clue to those angry, disturbing thoughts, but he had evidently received a check, and, in the moment of his discomfiture, might be more open to impressions. She was moved to utter a tender word, to try to get near that lonely, close-shut heart.

"Dear," she said, and for a moment she let her hand rest on his arm, "you are troubled, and I may not know the reason why. Oh, it is hard to live thus near, yet so wide apart."

The speech, simple although it was, seemed to electrify him. The deadly pallor of a minute ago changed to deep red. He was over-mastered by some new, strong

passion other than hate and vengeance. Was it pity for the woman he was drawing within the toils of his own horrid fate? Could it be remorse for worse crimes overtaking him too late, or yearning for the chances of quiet happiness he had thrown away?

"Do you care for me at all, then, my poor Erna?" he asked in a strangely measured, reined-in voice, whilst his eyes rested on the beautiful woman whose image had now become a part of his daily life.

For the first time since their coming together, Bernarda then determined to show him a little kindness. Up till the present moment she had been friendly, sisterly, womanly, but not a reminder of the old clinging fondness had ever betrayed itself in look, word, or deed.

She spoke calmly enough, yet there was something in both words and voice that affected Edgeworth strangely—a personality, a suggestion of intimacy, an affectionateness, hitherto kept in the background. By tacit consent they had avoided two topics. The old love-story was never touched upon, and with regard to his secret career, inviolate silence was ever maintained. Of other incidents, adventures, and experiences, they talked freely enough. But as friends, not lovers; lovers of home and country, not conspirators. He evidently found intense relief in pouring out his grievances—their grievances, as he ever put it—to her. The means to be taken in order to redress them were discreetly and rigidly ignored. Thus they led double lives. She kept to herself all that abhorrence of his convictions—those wild yet ardent hopes of shaking them. Edgeworth exercised equal self-control, delicately ignoring the very words that might shock or horrify her. Except for these reservations, their intercourse had been open and confidential enough. They both read certain books, took keen interest in many topics, had musical and dramatic tastes in common. Here, then, was plenty of scope for the fireside talk of two.

"Do I care for you?" Bernarda now said very gently. "What a question!" Then, with a low, sad laugh: "Women may care for the men they marry in so many different ways. We were young together—that is a tie always; and we love the same things—that is a still stronger tie." She added with a look almost of tenderness: "I am alone in the world, and so are you. We should both be good to each other, I am sure."

Did her words move him at all? She hardly hoped it, yet he looked subdued and crestfallen. She knew not how it was; she did not in the least intend to break her compact. A word of protest would out.

"We must remain in one sense strangers to each other; but I cannot help hoping—maybe, against hope—that some day you will think as I do. Oh!" here surrendering herself to a moment of noble enthusiasm, "if I could win you for even an hour from this dreadful fellowship——"

"You would be ready to pay the penalty? To fall a martyr in our sacred cause too?" he broke in, greatly excited. "My poor girl, have done! Do you know that your life would not be safe for a moment if you were suspected of exercising a counter-influence upon me? Listen, then. I am bound to tell you the truth. If I am espied upon here, it is not by the enemy, but my friends. The foe dreaded here is yourself!"

Light flashed upon her mind now; she understood everything—Marion's terror, his consternation.

"There is but one thing to do," he said, fiercely vindictive. "We go our ways as if no lurking villains crawled the earth. By Heaven, if so much as a hair of your head were injured, the tables might be turned with a vengeance! I am no milk-sop to be trifled with. That I can tell them. But," here his voice changed from menace to mild suasion, "do, my dear Erna, get this flowery concern off your hands; bid your girls pack. To the—to the North Pole with your æsthetic patrons, and let us be married forthwith. What difference can a few weeks sooner or later make to you?"

Bernarda had not yet recovered from her surprise. The revelation Edgeworth's words had been to her wrapped the future in still deeper gloom, and lent this coming marriage an awful aspect.

"Everything will be altered then," he went on, growing more and more persuasive; "as my wife, you will cease to be an object of suspicion. You need not fear for your personal safety in the future."

"Am I so craven-spirited as to think of myself?" broke in Bernarda with proud scorn. To Edgeworth's thinking, she had never looked so superb. "No, indeed; personal safety, as you call it, is the last guarantee I should ask," she went on quickly and agitatedly, unable to bear this scene any longer. "Have everything your

own way. The holidays begin in three weeks. Only stay away till then, and all else shall be as you wish."

"Will you really marry me on this day three weeks?" he said, with an exultation in his voice which Bernarda was too agitated to notice.

"Have I not said it, dear Edgeworth?" she said, almost petulantly; "only leave me now. Send me a line. I will meet you on Sunday afternoon in the park, or anywhere. Make your rendezvous, only begone now."

But the more anxious she was for him to go, the less inclined he seemed to take his departure. His almost lover-like eagerness seemed a cruel irony of fate in her eyes. Why this veneer of tenderness, this simulation of a deeper feeling than any that existed?

"Well," he said, rising at last, "since you drive me from your doors, go I must. This day three weeks, remember. Good-bye, then!"

He advanced as if to kiss her, but Bernarda affected not to perceive the movement. She could bear his indifference, his familiarity no longer shocked her, his easy unreserve had become a matter of course; but the slightest approach to fondness, the merest term of endearment, the least little reminder of the lover of old days, seemed to freeze her into marble. Her first impulse was to ignore Edgeworth's initiative, and let him go away as usual with an ordinary hand-clasp. Then, mindful of her intention to be kind to him, to win him if she could, suddenly overwhelmed by the stern necessity she was under of not consulting her own feelings at all, only thinking of him, and how she might best gain what affection he had to give, she moved a step forward and gave the kiss he had just now solicited in vain.

"We will at least try to care for each other," he murmured, and, without a word more, hurried away as discomposed and ill at ease as herself.

"We will try to care for each other!" The speech kept ringing in Bernarda's ears with the bitter irony of many another. Edgeworth had no intention to wound; she felt sure, on the contrary, that he was always trying to soothe and gratify her. But it was just such utterances as these that made her realise her position. He had never really cared for her, but she had accorded him the one passionate love of a life, and just because he could not understand the nature of deep, abiding affection at all, he



was perpetually wounding her susceptibilities now.

All this she must bear, and she was schooling herself every day into fitness for the future she had accepted. She had said to herself, when accepting it, that if Edgeworth's love for her had been a delusion, her own was dead. But was it so?

#### CHAPTER X. REVELATIONS.

BUT Edgeworth came as usual, and Bernarda in turn grew reckless. A kind of blind fatalism took possession of her. Instead of trying to reason him out of his bravado, she seemed bent on playing into his hands and those of his associates. The lame girl had been sent for to keep Marion company; the apprentices were informed that the school would close when the Christmas holidays began, but Marion, to her great joy, was to remain with her mistress, and although the discreet little maiden never opened her lips on the subject, she felt sure of what was going to happen. Her mistress was about to marry Mr. Edgeworth. Bernarda shuddered as she saw herself forced to believe that some fearful climax in his career must be at hand. Such close watch set on Edgeworth's movements could only mean one thing. Even Edgeworth, the lavish, the audacious, the unscrupulous Edgeworth, whose life, fortune, and good report were freely staked on this desperate game, even he had become a possible renegade in the eyes of his associates. There are limits to such fanaticism as his, and before a catastrophe without precedent Edgeworth himself might quail.

She could but suspect then that unwelcomely, although inevitably, the period fixed upon for their marriage just tallied with an important stage in his career of conspirator. For other reasons he had hurried on events, and now stood, not only on the point of marriage, but on the brink of crime. His followers feared to lose him when he was most needed. Apprehensions were evidently entertained that this lady he visited so often might seduce him from his principles. His restlessness, his unreasonableness in coming too often, and his craving for her company, she could only interpret this way. Matters had come to a climax since their meeting. Ah, thought Bernarda, had she not deceived herself from the beginning, and taken refuge in an illusory indifference, things would have been much easier now! Without love there is no pain. The

horrible suspicions in her mind made her shrink appalled at the step she was about to take, and then came a voluntary surrendering to a wild hope, almost akin to despair. She would marry him, and try to save him, even if her own life paid the forfeit. What value had life for her now?

He came as usual, and she set herself deliberately to the task of reaching that apparently cold heart, and influencing, no matter how lightly, that impulsive, yet, as it seemed, implacable nature; anyhow, harm she could never do him. The three weeks were diminished by one, when Edgeworth made a second and most unlooked-for visit on the same afternoon.

They had already taken tea together out of the shamrock cups, chatting after the prosaic yet intimate fashion of two friends about to set up a fireside partnership. Cooks, cuisine, and china — how often have not such topics formed the pleasantest part of courtship! For even in the heyday of romance, lovemaking in itself very soon comes to an end. The tune will be repeated to-morrow and to-morrow; familiarity with every note makes it come to an end so much more quickly than at first. The variations are gradually left out.

What was her astonishment to hear Edgeworth's ring an hour or two after the animated tea they had just taken together. She had sent her two maidens to a penny-reading close by, and when she heard a disturbing ring at the front door, no more expected him than if he had been on the other side of the Atlantic. Truth to tell, she wanted no visitors just then. She was busy as any other woman before transporting her wardrobe to a man's domicile. She was indeed counting her silk stockings.

"Let me in, please. For five minutes — no more," he cried, looking the reverse of sentimental or ingratiating. "Don't keep the door open an inch as if I were a wild beast."

Bernarda laughed good-humouredly and let him in, gently closing the door after her intruder. She was accustomed to hear him use strong language. It amused her when he touched no patriotic theme.

"My dearest Edgeworth," she cried as soon as they were in her little parlour, "what is the matter?"

She perceived now that it was no time for persiflage or genial talk. His face was that of a close-driven, all but desperate man. He put down hat and stick, flung aside coat and muffler, and burst forth in an aggressive voice:

"Do not say a word, Erna. Let me tell you that beforehand. I can listen to no objections or demurs. We must be married a week sooner than I said."

He looked at her almost as if he invited the remonstrance just now forbidden. Her passiveness offered no target for his weapons. It was evident that the handful of arrows must be spent, however aimlessly.

"You ask a dozen questions without once opening your lips," he went on. "Why this danger? why any hurry? why this? why that? your face says. You are thinking of your schoolgirls, your patrons, and all the rest of it—what does it all signify a straw? But our marriage is serious."

Bernarda tried to soothe him and smile away his irritation.

"Of course it is serious," she said. "In the matter of a date I will not gainsay you. Have everything your own way." She looked at him fondly, archly, insinuatingly. "Only I must say, dear, that you disarrange me not a little. I have all kinds of business to settle. Was ever a woman married except in the best gown she could afford? Mine I have yet to buy. Now a week sooner or later, what conceivable difference can it make to you?"

Her playfulness did not soothe him this time.

"I knew what you would say," he answered with extreme moroseness. "But I tell you"—here he fixed on her a look so full of dark significance that her animation vanished in a moment. She divined what was coming, and awaited it, trembling with apprehension—"a week sooner or later may make all the difference in the world to me," he added, grimly ironic. "Do insurance companies grant policies on such lives as mine? Answer that question."

Her expression had changed from dreadful suspense to horrid certitude. She knew now what he meant right well. It was no moment for veiled speeches and random words, for common kindness or meaningless endearment. The fearful thought flashed across her mind that this misguided, adored Edgeworth might be hers for a brief space only. Perhaps already he was a doomed man.

Shaken with emotion, no longer thinking of herself at all, or of her womanly pride, thinking only of him and of the twofold peril he was evidently in—peril of life and limb, peril of iniquity past human, perhaps Divine forgiveness—she now

gathered him for a moment to her arms, her cheek, her lips.

"Oh," she cried, "I love you, Edgeworth! Will you break my heart, and leave me desolate?"

His acerbity and vindictiveness were gone now. Bernarda was not astonished at thus far being able to soften him. But he was stirred by some new unaccountable emotion. There were tears on his cheek and in his voice as he next spoke.

"I ought not to sacrifice you," he began. "But, my Erna, my love, I cannot give you up. I never cared for you in the old days. You were a careless girl, and I a wild, roaming lad. Things are altered with us now. You are the first woman I could become a coward for. Don't contradict. It is cowardly to drag you down with me."

Bernarda had sunk to a low stool at his side, and kneeling on it clasped both hands about his arm.

No need for her to speak; her secret was out already, and in that first trembling surprise following his, it seemed to her as if there was nothing more left for either to say at all. And what else was left but love and pain—a fleeting joy and unending, retributive misery? But the joy made itself felt in both hearts, nevertheless.

"Why were we both so blind? Or, perhaps, like myself, you found this out on a sudden," he said, compelling her for a moment to look at him. After that long, long look, he went on in rapid, painfully-eager accents, as if, perhaps, even this brief interview might be suddenly cut short, and his last chance of speaking out gone for ever: "A week, sweetheart, will make you as much my wife as a golden jubilee. You will bear my name—be in a position to vindicate it, if needs be. All that I have will be yours. No one then can contest my will," with a sardonic laugh, "on the plea that I am a mad-man!"

Then, like herself, swayed by overmastering passion, for one intense moment alive to nothing else but the conviction that he was hers as much as any human being can be another's by virtue of instinctive attraction, closest sympathy, affection, love—call it what we will—he added wildly:

"One kiss from you, my dear—a wife's kiss, you know—and come dark doom when it will! Erna, Erna, you cannot save me! You cannot follow me on my



dark way! For a week, a day, an hour, we may belong to each other. Perhaps no more. Only love me, then, this little while!"

## IN THE FLORIDA PINE WOODS.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

THE mail-car landed me at Bartow, a town of three hundred inhabitants, at eight p.m. The ride, or rather walk, through the sandy track from Tampa had lasted fifteen hours, and the distance accomplished was not more than forty miles. We had come through only one settlement of any size, Shiloh; and but four collections of low-browed bungalows large enough to bear the name of town according to Florida standard. A continuous, bruising, bone-disjointing, jerking, temper-trying jaunt of forty miles through pine-forest, with here and there a glade of savannah to the right or left, or a silver lake with a knot of long-legged cranes or a rosy flamingo or two in the low grass that bordered it; passing many an acre of rich orange-orchards, the trees golden with ripe fruit, and one tree in particular, with its burden of five thousand oranges, which claims to be the largest in the state; passing fields of sugar-cane, ready for the mill, and acres upon acres of land from which the pines had been burnt in rough and ready fashion, the black, charred stumps standing forth dolorously awaiting the time when the settler shall put his axe to their roots; until at last the sparse lights of Bartow flicker in the distance, and draw forth what little energy remains in the nearly-exhausted team of mules that have plodded us through the final fifteen miles of our journey. We had had to provision ourselves beforehand—eating our late breakfast and early dinner out of the polished tins our good hotel-manager had provided at so much (indeed, at so very much) a head, and sucking fresh-picked oranges for dessert. But it was a terribly long after-dinner interval before the chance of supper at Bartow. And the delicious aromatic breezes, that fanned us through the endless colonnades of pines, had stimulated our appetites. We were, therefore, very delighted to jump from the car, and get within the whitewashed wooden fencing which was a distinguishing feature of Blount's Hotel at Bartow.

Mr. Blount himself, as the leader of a party of ten men and women who had

come forth into the night mist to welcome the mail, held the oil-lamp which was to help him in greeting boarders for his hotel, if there were any; and, before I could jump down, the thing was flashed in my face, with the enquiry:

"Any fellah for me?"

"That depends on you," said L. "Are you Blount?"

"I'm Blount," was the reply; and then we all went into the house, while the mail-boy went on to the post-office with his copper-nailed mail-sacks.

"No, no; I won't hearken to a word about nothing, till you've filled your stomach!" protested Mr. Blount, in reply to my conventional enquiry about a single bed; and, with a flourish of his long thin hand, he led me into the "saloon" (a roomy apartment of new wood, containing two long tables, and a number of chairs, but not a trace of other furniture or fitting), and there I saw my supper.

Mr. Blount knew perfectly, he said, what an appetite the Tampa mail begot in the passengers it brought, and so he always provided a heavy supper in readiness.

There was cold beefsteak—each steak a regular square of some three inches by half an inch in thickness—cold tinned-beef, and cold cabbage; cold bacon in cold liquor; cakes that were hot in the morning, but were now as cold as the bacon; butter and syrup. Only the coffee was hot; but the coffee was steaming. It was a magnificent banquet for a man who was in good form, and indisposed to carp at trivialities.

"And I allers sits by to see 'em eat—it's as good as a double supper," said Mr. Blount, with his elbows on the table, jerking his little goatee-beard when he spoke, in the most comical manner. Mr. Blount was a tall, lean man, a little bowed in the back, with a thin, muscular nose, rather prominent than not, and a pair of dark, wide-awake eyes. He was past sixty, but well-mellowed, and no doubt as strong in the arm as ever he had been. The men and women who had followed Mr. Blount to the mail-buggy, grouped themselves picturesquely about the portal of the saloon, the women placed gallantly in front to see best; and all took as deep an interest in my knife and fork as myself or Mr. Blount. If I smiled at the door between two mouthfuls, I always had several genial smiles in return.

Bartow was forty miles from civilisation at the time, and growing with difficulty, in

spite of its delicious climate, good land, and the game in the woods all around it. Three months after my visit, the railway was within hail of Bartow, to the jubilation of real estate dealers, Mr. Blount, and all others of the community; and there were three hotels where so lately Mr. Blount had had it all to himself.

Well, supper over, I began to feel the effect of the diabolical bumpings and shakings of the mail-car. I yearned for bed.

"To be sure," said Mr. Blount, marking up my first item on the score, which was to mount so ambitiously ere I left Bartow. "I'll see if we can give you a whole bed—there's some halves, I know, and perhaps I'll set two halves in a whole, and give you one o' their empties!"

"Don't forget clean sheets, then," said I, after Mr. Blount, knowing by experience how oddly and persistently conservative outlying hotel-keepers are in the matter of bed-linen.

It was soon done as Mr. Blount had proposed. A gentleman from Kentucky, with a cough, was put alongside a rather piebald-looking Texas man with long hair, and I was to sleep in the Kentuckian's bed. I could not help it if the latter gentleman looked evilly at me from out the crowd, when Mr. Blount made his plan known to the public; but it was a relief when he turned his ill-humour upon the Texas man, who seemed, for his part, quite ready to reciprocate it. If I was willing to pay my two dollars a day for accommodation, I deserved a bed to myself. The others, not being English, were not so particular, and so were charged only one dollar. It is the same all over Florida.

The bedroom was really quite luxurious in comparison with the saloon. It contained all requisites, and a quantity of lumber, which was spread about with consummate art, to deceive the rough American mind into belief that it was furniture. There were bookshelves, moreover, containing Washington Reports, and a number of school-books. A stuffed wild cat (not too well stuffed, either), on a wooden perch over my bedstead, I could have spared, especially when I found that the moon gradually got up in the night and shone on the wild cat's eyes. And there were a good dozen of fine, ripe oranges which the gentleman from Kentucky had provided, from the hotel grove, for his enjoyment during the night; all of which I regarded as legitimately, if involuntarily, bequeathed to me.

Oh, the delight of a soft mattress after the fifteen hours' jolt! I revelled in the luxury of it for many minutes; until I thought I would tempt sleep in my usual way, with a book in my hands. For this purpose an American geography-manual, laudably dogs'-eared, offered itself to me. I was curious about the estimate formed by an American of our British progress and social virtues, remembering as I did, from my own schooldays, Mr. Cornwell's celebrated and scathing geographical assertions about the Americans—that they have "an overweening opinion of themselves." But I found nothing to compare with our own geographer's severity. The book said of Great Britain that it "is one of the most important states in the world, and surpasses every other in its manufactures and commerce," and that "the intelligence, enterprise, and industry of its inhabitants are nowhere equalled, except in the United States." Again, that "though luxury and corruption exist to a considerable extent in certain portions of English society, the mass of the people are distinguished for sound morals." And, that "the Scotch are well educated, and are, perhaps, the most moral and religious people in Europe." All which was so very true that it soon sent me to sleep.

About an hour after sunrise, I awoke to find the room flooded with rich light from the "god of day," who rose magnificently, unobstructed by the flimsiest of clouds. Bartow people think something extraordinary will happen when they have a dull day; blue sky, soothing breezes, and warm sun are matters of fact for some three hundred and sixty days in the year; and it is as comfortable to sit on the wooden steps of a store in December as in July.

Ding, dong! The first breakfast-bell began to ring before I was fully aware of my location, and a minute later in walked the bell-ringer himself, a grey-headed Irishman from Limerick, with plenty of sad-tinted wit in him, as I afterwards discovered.

"I thought as I'd see if ye was willing to get up—some lies a day after coming from Tampa," said the man, with not the ghost of a regret for his ill-timed and unannounced entrance.

"Tell me," said I, "who are in the house, and what is going on in Bartow. You can talk while I wash."

"Arrah! and do ye wash every morning now, really?" asked the Irishman.

"Eh! but I reckon you don't do the water-carrying, my boy; else ye'd be afther not wasting a drop, and making it all do twice. There's a chap from the old country in number four as is clean enough to go in a pulpit, and he's made one jugful last three days—the jewel!"

"What are town-lots selling at?" I asked, to interrupt him.

"Town-lots, is it?" and the chamberman dropped the bearing of a menial, and became at once an acute, small-eyed man of business. "Wal, I've some neat hundred-yard squares in Church Street, I'd part with for a dollar a square yard."

"Thank you; and now go, there's a good man," said I.

It is a maxim that one should never judge by appearances. This Irish filler and emptier of bedroom jugs, who slept on a hard palliase outside my door, in the passage, and was eternally lamenting his exile from the "poor old country," owned land within a brief hour's walk of the hotel, worth thousands of dollars. He did not go away at once, but, reassuming the confidential, servant manner, whispered the item of news which was to thrill all Bartow in the course of the morning.

"The Major's dead—rest his soul. There'll be a fine buryin' to-morrow."

Then he left me for the tenants of the next room, to whom he immediately disburthened himself in like manner.

"The Major's dead—rest his soul. There'll be a fine buryin' to-morrow."

I found Bartow to be a charming little settlement, cut out of the forest. North, south, east, and west, the pines and cypress hedged it in. There was a broad main street, outlined with tolerable distinctness, and two or three embryonic side-streets, speedily truncated by the pine woods. Mr. Blount's hotel stood by itself at one end of the chief street; then came a gap of some five dozen yards, and another wooden house; another gap, and another house; and so on. Nor were the houses in a line. They rambled in a zigzag to the farthest, at the other extremity of the city, which bordered the primeval forest. But they were all built on piles, so that the borough surveyor of the future may, at comparatively little cost, make the borough symmetrical. Some of the tenements rose in the midst of a small orange-orchard, notably Mr. Blount's hotel; but the habit was one to be discouraged, inasmuch as it might give visitors a wrong idea of the value of land in the heart of the city. The houses

were nearly all snowy white, with green window-shutters.

At each end of the city was a brand-new church, so dazzling in its coat of white-wash that the eye cowered before it, and with a gay, green, diamond-shaped tower for the bell. The Episcopal church was in the west end of Bartow, the Baptist church in the east, and the length of the city was between them. Within a stone's-throw of the Episcopal church was the one drinking-saloon of the city, two or three excellent general stores, a drug store, the black residence of a family of darkies, surrounded by a noble orange-orchard, the city slaughter-house, and the city gaol. This last I took for a lonely summer-house, until I noticed its iron-studded door and barred windows. It would hold perhaps ten miscreants, seeing that the windows were unglazed—else three would be enough, supposing they were not also condemned to suffocation. And with very little extraneous aid, five strong villains might get the entire prison-house upon their shoulders, and march off with it into the woods. But it is said that a man must be very depraved before he can get the town-marshal to sentence him to a term of imprisonment; the good citizens of Bartow would rather make a private purse for the sinner, and whisper him to move on to a place which can afford to keep lazy police officials, and find victualling for prisoners into the bargain.

But, if Bartow was ordinarily happy and light of tongue, it was not so on this particular morning. Everyone had known the Major, and his loss was like the loss of a relation. I stopped at a low shed in the heart of the city, where a few shavings before the door betokened it to be a carpenter's shop. Several well-tanned, thin-cheeked men were chatting earnestly with the carpenter, who looked, I thought, very consequential.

"What wood'll it be?" asked one of the idlers; and then, turning, they accosted me in the remarkably polite and engaging way common to Southerners who detect an Englishman in their city; and the speaker added for my information: "It's Major P——, poor man! he died this morning, and we're going to bury him!"

"Yes; so I should suppose," said I, a little absently. It is somewhat embarrassing, until you are thoroughly used to it, to be quite cordial with men, however genial themselves, whom you know to be determined to draw a dollar or two

from your pocket ere they lose sight of you. "It's a hot climate," I added, observing that they stiffened a little.

"I guess pine would serve," said the carpenter, who showed less interest in me, and therefore gained my esteem on the spot.

"Will you stay for the burying?" asked one of the men, smiling sweetly. "You'd like to look round, no doubt, sir; and my buggy is quite at your service—it is, indeed, sir."

"You are extremely kind," said I. I knew the gentleman to be a land-agent by the style of his offer, which was else unexceptionable. "But I should judge our friend here"—indicating the carpenter—"has had very few coffins to make since——"

"Three since I come, and that's five year back, and the last a fall ago," said the carpenter severely, like a professor of statistics.

"No doubt it is felt a great deal," said I.

"Felt? Why, sir, you'd never know it to be the same place. There's singing, and laughing, and joking all the day through in Bartow. It's the best-behaved, most religious, and jolliest little city south of latitude twenty-eight."

This from the buggy gentleman. I smiled, nodded, and left them to settle about the poor Major's coffin.

Returning to the hotel, I discovered Mr. Blount in his shirt-sleeves turning over the pages of his visitors'-book—it was a huge volume, calculated to last until A.D. 1900, unless Bartow grew prodigiously fast.

"I'm jest a looking," he said with a kind smile of recognition, "ter see when poor Major P—— come these parts. He were a fine figger of a man when fust I see him, an' he ain't a sight changed till yesterday. Eh, dear me—all flesh is grass!"

"And talking of grass, Mr. Blount, why does the municipality allow so much to grow in the main street?"

I was curious about this, though the effect was very pleasing.

"Don't jest, sir," said Mr. Blount, pushing his iron spectacles over his forehead, and peering at me doubtfully; "but if you be solemn, why, it's to give the beasts a picking on to Kissimmee. It saves leaving the highway, it does."

Crash, crash, crash! a series of continuous crashes, in fact, outside, on the white boarded promenade which connected the front of Blount's hotel with the back, like a tunnel.

"It's them boys and gells," remarked Mr. Blount with a deep sigh; "I can't make 'em recognise as we harn't lost a settler—a gentleman settler, too—since last fall. They will have their fun; and, gracious sir, I ain't a point sure as they ain't doing the prudentest course possible."

"I think so," said I, and going outside I saw seven of the inmates of Blount House careering up and down on roller-skates in a most ungainly fashion—four young women (ages from sixteen to forty) and three young men (one an Italian, whose effusive courtesies were positive nectar to the American ladies). The exercise was admirable, considered in itself; but, personally, I thought a thermometer that marked seventy something in the coolest part of the house quite sufficient exercise. The ladies were buxom, full-lunged, free-mannered, hearty, and wore very short skirts. Thus they were prepared for tumbles at very little inconvenience to themselves, and tumble they did remarkably. One of them was always down, and when one fell the others roared with laughter, and all seemed endeavouring to pick her up to their manifest peril likewise. But of course the prostrate one would not think of being lifted to her feet by one of her own sex. Oh dear no! She lay and giggled discordantly in a condition of seething good-humour until one of the men volunteered to help her, and then she pulled him over if she could, and, like a Phoenix, rose on his ruins roaring with merriment.

"Come and have a lark, sir," cried one of the young women to me when I had joined in their laughter, which it was impossible not to feel was contagious. It was the young woman of forty, my pride was ill-natured enough to notice.

"No, thank you," said I; "you look very jolly, though, and if I hadn't a headache and feverish symptoms, I would certainly have a turn myself."

They laughed in the most amiable manner, and accepted my excuses, which were genuine. So genuine, indeed, that in self-defence I went forthwith into the sandy garden of the hotel, and taking the orange-rake, secured from the upper branches of the finest tree, a brace of plump russet-spotted golden fruit.

"It's a rule of the house," Mr. Blount had impressed on me that morning, "that visitors eats all the oranges they fancies without charge. I had a gentleman from Savannah who ate fifty a day. Well, I

couldn't do with many like he. But, in moderation, mister—in moderation, you may go it."

And very delicious, sweet-juiced fruit they were. Our Mediterranean and Spanish fruit will not hold a candle to a Florida orange, eaten from the tree. In Bartow, oranges were a drug at this time. Transport was too costly to make them marketable. Indeed, the nigger who owned a prolific orchard nearly opposite Blount House manured his land with thousands of fruit, worth in New York or Philadelphia five cents each.

Dinner was a very serious meal in Blount House that day. I am inclined to think that this meal is a serious one at all times in the States, but in Bartow, with Major P.'s death over us like the canopy of a catafalque, it was terribly solemn. The "girls" waited on us. They were deft-handed young women, but very heavy of foot, and their incessant perambulation between the kitchen and the saloon was a mild "clog chorus" in itself. But what they lacked in experience and polish as waiters they made up in goodness of heart, and it was completely winning to be pressed by one of the four after the other to take "just a pinch more cabbage," "a pin's-head of fat," or "a tater," the entreaty always ending with a "Do, mister!" which was irresistible to some of the American men. The young women were by no means to be signalled for or ordered about like hotel waiting-men in the old country. No, indeed. A flicker of imperiousness in the eye of a man would have stifled the warmth of their hearts, and made them pout and look sulky, and probably the dear creatures would have let such a man whistle for some of his dinner. It was the thing to smile your very sweetest at one of the "girls," or vaguely over your shoulder in a manner agreeable to the consciousness of whichever of them first noticed you, and then, when you were cared for, to smile back with all the gratitude you could condense into a single look. The old boarders—aly fishes!—had never a glum shadow upon them from soup to coffee, and they were simply besieged with attentions. But, on the whole, it was as monosyllabic a dinner as anyone could desire or reprehend. Mr. Blount stood, with a keen eye ranging up and down the table, carving, at its head; and it was a mercy the good man had plenty of strength in his arms. The hunch of beef could not have been tougher if it

had been cut from a twenty-year-old cab-horse. Watching him reminded one inevitably of an industrious carpenter trying to saw through an obstinate knot in his beam, and he hissed like an ostler over the job.

After dinner there was much quiet talk in the corridor of the hotel, varied by inroads now and again upon the oranges in the orchard. The editor of the Bartow Informant called to ask my opinion of Bartow, which came out almost verbatim in the next number of the Informant, no doubt greatly to the profit and information of the inhabitants. Three land-agents and attorneys looked in for orders, and with offers of buggies for inspecting the country within five, ten, or twenty miles of Bartow. The postmaster came to see if Mr. Blount could give him change for a quarter-dollar; he had been asked for a ten cent stamp, and on the strength of it was well assured that Bartow's halcyon days were at hand. The boy from the drug-store presented a petition from his master for an egg, if one was to be had—vain hope! Mr. Blount said that eggs were worth a fabulous number of cents apiece just then, and that a recent number of the Informant had contained many paragraphs about the unprecedented behaviour of the Bartow hens of late, and lastly, when the sun had gone behind the western pines, and a vivid yellow glow had bespread itself about the city, betokening the coming of night, the supper-bell sounded gleefully. We had wasted an entire afternoon in idle chitchat. But then life in Bartow contains nothing more wearing than this, from January 1st to December 31st.

"Try to be well enough for the funeral, sir—now do. It'll be such a sight," said one of the girls (not the forty-year-old one this time), when I had shaken her warmly by the hand and wished her good-night.

Funeral, indeed! Why, I felt bad enough to be ready for my own funeral, let alone the poor Major's. And I attributed much of my feverish restlessness that night to the abominable cat over my bed-head; its eyes, with the moon upon them, were like twin lanterns.

#### WHICH OF THEM?

A STORY IN TEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER V.

WHEN October came in, the party at Woodlands broke up. Mr. Marston had not petted his pheasants as he had his partridges, and there was little to be done in the way of shooting them; besides, he

felt decidedly worse and weaker, and wished to be near his office and his town doctor. So orders were given that the household should move to Russell Square; and Brixton promised himself great advantages in the campaign, as Kensington would doubtless be off to the moors. Kensington, however, had no such intention, and he announced that he heard such a bad account of the grouse in his little place in Scotland that he should give them a respite for this year, and spend a quiet autumn in town, if his uncle and Cousin Lucy would sometimes take pity on a solitary bachelor, who once was sociable. It was not Mr. Marston's policy to dismiss Kensington, or make him throw up the game as hopeless; so he received consoling assurances, and congratulated himself that, at any rate, he would be rid of the Yorkshireman, whom he considered his only formidable rival. Deep, therefore, was his disgust when Yorkshire Alan mentioned, in his turn, that his father thought it a pity for him to go to Canada without having seen anything of London; and that, therefore, he meant to take a room somewhere for a month or so, and see as much as was to be seen at that time of the year. Kensington went off with this intelligence to Horton, who was loafing round the stables, smoking a cigar, which he threw away when his master appeared. The relations of these two were peculiar. Horton's wages were very irregularly paid, and were now very much in arrear; besides which, Kensington was in the habit of expecting him to produce sixpences and shillings whenever they happened to be wanted, and never remembering the trivial circumstance afterwards. On the other hand, some of Kensington's friends were racing-men, well behind the scenes in one or two important stables; and either through Kensington, or through Bacchus, Horton managed to pick up information from them which he made to pay him better than his master did. Horton made a book, while Kensington backed horses—which is as much as to say that Horton was growing rich, and Kensington poor. But neither could at present do without the other; Horton was not in the long run inclined to pass a sponge over his master's ever-growing debt to him, and the only chance of its being paid lay in the expected inheritance. The more money he had, the more he wanted, and he was not likely to have any scruples as to how it was obtained. He listened grimly.

"The Yorkshireman means business, then. Look here, sir, this is a close race, and it will be won on the post. Of course, you were right to throw up Scotland; now you must keep yourself forward—wait your chance, and keep an eye on the Yorkshireman. You'd better ask him to stay with you in town."

"What a confounded bore! What should I do with him?"

"Show him life, and give him a chance of getting into a mess. Does he drink?"

"No, hang him!" It is not necessary to reproduce Kensington's private conversation in all its native vigour. Adjectives may be left to the reader's imagination. "He's a teetotaler, or much the same thing. Takes nothing but beer."

"So much the better. A little will do it when he once begins. Then see how Miss Scott will admire him when he calls to say good-night. I'll tell you, sir!"

And then followed the details of a plan to debauch and disgrace the inconvenient rustic.

Kensington appeared at lunch in the best of tempers.

"Tell you what, my dear fellow," he said to Yorkshire, "you're under the most lamentable delusion in fancying that there is anything whatever to see in London in October. Truly speaking, it doesn't exist; there's only the skeleton of what will be London in the spring. You might as well go to the theatre at nine in the morning."

"There will be London enough left for me, I dare say," returned Yorkshire coolly.

A savage look swept over Kensington's face for a moment, but he brought back the expression of determined good-humour, and recommenced:

"As far as that goes, I am as great a fool as yourself, for I am staying in town, too. Let's be two fools together. We shall be bored, of course; but not as badly as we should bore ourselves alone. Come and take a bed in my chambers, and I'll take you to the Tower, and the Polytechnic, and Madame Tussaud's. I'll show you all the things that country-cousins ought to see, and some that they oughtn't. I've never seen them myself, so it will be a lark."

"Thanks," said Yorkshire, who did not fancy the proposal. "It's awfully good of you, but surely I should crowd you very much."

"Not at all; there are three rooms in my set. My fellow usually sleeps in the

third, but I always turn him out when I want to put up a friend, and he gets a bed next door. Plenty of room."

"Thanks," again said Yorkshire; "but I think I had better keep my independence. I might be coming and going at hours that wouldn't suit you."

"Hours!" repeated Kensington scornfully. "Do you suppose I have family prayers before eight o'clock breakfast, and lights out at ten? Stay out all night if you choose; you can have a latch-key. Just make my diggings your head-quarters, and use them as if they were your own."

There was no withstanding this burst of hospitality, and Yorkshire yielded.

Now Kensington was not a villain, he was only an ordinary young man with vices; but it must be owned that when Yorkshire went to live in chambers with his cousin and Horton, he had fallen into very bad company.

Meantime, Mr. Marston and Lucy settled down in their town-house to what was rapidly becoming a sick-room life. Mr. Marston would now have bad days and good days; bad days in which he was confined to bed, or to his armchair, suffering, fretful, and nursed carefully by Lucy and Mrs. White; good days on which he could attend to business, drive to his office for an hour or two, and see visitors. On these days Brixton would be admitted, when he made his regular call on his way home from Messrs. Timmins's office, and would often stay until ten o'clock, as the evening was usually Mr. Marston's brightest time. On the bad days he would see none of his nephews but Yorkshire, whose presence had a soothing effect on him. The young man's arms were both strong and gentle, and he could lift and support the sick man as no woman could do; he could also sit quiet when he was not wanted, without either smoking, talking, fidgeting, or looking as if he were pining to be doing one of the three. Indeed, for him it was quite solace enough to be within reach of Lucy, sharing her work, hearing her voice, touched by her dress.

One of Mr. Marston's good days arrived at last, which seemed to deserve the name of a rally. He had been better than usual also the day before, and now insisted on being dressed at eleven, and going out in the carriage with Lucy alone. Mrs. White remonstrated as strongly as she dared; but no one ventured to go far in opposing Mr. Marston, and his arrangements were carried out.

Lucy did not know the place to which she was driven at the time, nor what her uncle was doing inside, while she sat in the carriage, nor did she ever learn exactly how he managed the details of the transaction. In about a quarter of an hour he reappeared, gave his orders to the coachman, and then was helped in by the footman, looking rather tired, but much elated.

"Now, Lucy," he said, as they drove off, "I dare say you've been wondering what I was going to do about that matter I spoke to you about before—my property and your marriage."

Lucy's tongue clove to the roof of her mouth. She turned quite white.

"I've taken plenty of time to think, for it was not altogether easy to decide. Kensington's a scamp. He'd waste my fortune in a couple of years, let the business go to the dogs, and beat you when you lost your pretty looks. Yorkshire is a fine fellow, and he'd keep up the partridges well, and look after the Woodlands; but he knows nothing about business. Brixton will be first-rate at the business; he has a good head, and the old name won't go down when he's behind it. But he's no hand at shooting, and I know he'll make Woodlands into a regular Cockney villa. However, one can't have everything, and the business matters more than the place; besides, Brixton is a steady-going chap, and will make you a capital husband."

"Oh, uncle," broke in Lucy, "please don't let me marry Brixton!"

"Not marry him! Why not?"

"Because I—I—I'd rather marry Yorkshire!"

It was out. Lucy thought the earth would have opened and swallowed her, but the carriage rolled serenely on terra-firma; she thought she was going to faint, but she didn't; she thought her uncle would either clasp her in his arms, or tell her that henceforth she was nothing to him, but he appeared no wise affected by the announcement. Nothing whatever happened, and Mr. Marston was not in the least impressed.

"Just so," he said. "I told you that you couldn't judge for yourself in this business, and it is lucky that you haven't to settle it. I say nothing against Yorkshire, but he is not the man to manage my business, and he shan't have it."

"Let Brixton have it then," pleaded Lucy, gaining courage, "and let Yorkshire have Woodlands—and me." The "me" was in very small type indeed. "You said——"

"Upon my word, young lady," exclaimed her uncle angrily, "you are very free with my property. You'll divide it round, will you? You'll settle who is to have this, and who is to have that? You'll kindly instruct my lawyer how to draw up my will? I have never been in the habit of consulting you on my business affairs, and when I want your advice, I shall ask it!"

"Indeed, I never meant——" faltered poor Lucy. "I am very sorry. It was only because you said——"

"I said I had fixed upon Brixton; that's all you've got to do with. I've not told him yet, because I waited to make some enquiries about him. Timmins gives him the best of characters; but no one knows so little about a young man as his employer, except his father, and I shall go by what I hear from another source. I'm expecting to hear every day, and if the report is favourable, as I expect, we'll waste no more time—you shall be married at once. If anything should turn up to his disadvantage, why, then there's Yorkshire to fall back upon. I've got a special licence here for Alan Marston to be married to Lucy Scott—it'll do for either of them—(the fellows here thought I got it for myself; ha, ha!)—and you shall be married next week before I get worse. I was so well to-day that I wouldn't miss the chance of settling the business. You'll want some new clothes—women always do. Here's fifty pounds. That's enough for the present, because you'll be going into mourning for me before you've time to wear out a new gown. Get what you want. I'm going to Picton's, and I'll drop you at Regent Circus. You can come home in a cab."

Poor Lucy had been too utterly crushed to interrupt. Now, however, when a bundle of notes was pushed into her muff, she attempted one more protest.

"I don't want anything new, indeed, uncle. You are so much better to-day—you will get well. Oh, do leave it all until you are better! You are very, very good to me, but please don't hurry—give me time!"

"Child, how much time do you suppose Death will give me for the asking?"

Lucy was awed and silenced. Mr. Marston had never spoken so solemnly before; and while she sought round in her mind for yet one word of entreaty that would not sound childish and trivial, the carriage stopped, and she found herself deposited on the pavement of Regent Street.

What a position! To be sent off to buy a trousseau, not knowing for what marriage! How different from other brides, shopping with motherly or sisterly help, full of bright anticipations, and with deep, trustful joys lying hidden under their pretty, frivolous pleasures! She felt inclined to cry, but that cannot be done in public without a veil, and she had not that protection. She almost called a cab, to go home at once in petulant disobedience. But that crisp paper between her fingers appealed to her with mute eloquence. What girl could stand long in Regent Street, deafening her ears, when fifty pounds were crying, "Go and spend us"? Not Lucy Scott. She began to relent a little. To choose a wedding-dress when you were not allowed to choose a husband! Impossible! Besides, she had white dresses already, one of which would do, if it should be wanted in a hurry. But she did need new pocket-handkerchiefs, and she liked them fine; and then she must have a winter jacket, and cloth trimmed with otter or skunk would be suitable "in any case," since everyone knows that furs can be worn in mourning.

So Lucy went about her shopping with subdued satisfaction and a resigned spirit, as far as the immediate emergency was concerned; but, although she felt absolutely unable to oppose her uncle to his face, and could see no good angel coming to her deliverance, she had a vague but fixed conviction that she was not going to marry Brixton. Deep down beneath the superficial blanchmange of gentle feminine natures, incapable of saying "I will," there often lies a foundation of solid, silent obstinacy, in which is an infinite power of saying "I won't."

Meantime, Mr. Marston had reached home, and found on his table a letter, which appeared to afford him much satisfaction. He said nothing to anyone about its contents, but he was cheerful and affectionate with Lucy when she returned. As the afternoon wore past, however, he grew very weak, and seemed to suffer from the exertion of the morning. Pain came on, and at last he gave up the idea of seeing Brixton when he should call as usual. He went to his bed, having first traced, with trembling fingers, a few lines to be given to his favoured nephew. When that nephew received and read them, he had great difficulty in maintaining any decent semblance of grief for his uncle's increased sufferings. As he walked home, the earth seemed to dance under him, and all London



to be his to command, for at last he thought that the long suspense was over. There could be no further doubting—which of them.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE following day was unequivocally "a bad day," and the night was worse. No improvement came with daylight, and the doctor looked very grave. Mr. Marston suffered much and constantly, and grew weaker. Yorkshire called in the morning; but he would not now see his nephew, and told Mrs. White she could send for a man to nurse him, if she wanted more help. Such a nurse was instantly sent for, and all began to feel the shadow of the end drawing near. Lucy hated to feel in her own heart a fluttering hope of release, but there it was. Nothing had yet been done; soon it would be impossible to do anything; and, however else her uncle left her, he would leave her free. But about four o'clock he called her to the bedside.

"Lucy."

"Yes, dear uncle."

"Write—at once."

"Yes, dear uncle—what?"

"To Brixton. Tell him—there is no time to lose—you must be married to-night."

"Oh no, uncle; not while you are so ill. Wait for a good day; you will be better to-morrow."

"No more good days for me; but—I dare say—I shall be better—in the evening. Tell him—seven o'clock—and to bring the parson—Wilson; he knows all about it. And send for Picton; he must be here."

"Very well, uncle. Now let me give you your medicine."

She gave it, and then slipped away to her own room, where she walked up and down in a fever of perplexity, and then, tired out with anxious nursing and a bad night, lay on her bed and stared at the ceiling with burning cheeks and eyes.

What should she do? Write that letter? Seal her death-warrant with her own hand? Give herself away to that detestable cad, for whom her angry and terrified thoughts picked out the ugliest word Yorkshire had ever found for him? Impossible—impossible! she would not. Defy her dying uncle—how could she? Nothing occurred to her but to do nothing, and hope that something would happen. Alas! she knew that the only something that was likely to

happen was her uncle's death, and to wish for that was the sin of murder against the old man who had been a father to her. She would not think of that. She shut the eyes of her mind, and longed wildly for the delivering something, as she lay wide awake, her blood racing through her veins, her face on fire, and her ears alive to every footstep and whisper in the hushed house, which yet seemed tingling with suppressed sounds. It seemed an age that she lay there, but it was not an hour before a messenger came to tell her that Mr. Marston was asking for her. She shook all over as she approached his bed; even during her short absence he seemed to have changed.

"Have you written that letter?" he said in a hoarse, weak voice that was not like his own.

"Not yet; I have been lying down."

"Not yet! It is getting late, and I am worse. I may die without seeing it done, and I will see it done! Write at once—at once, I tell you—and send it off!"

Lucy made a last appeal.

"Dear—dear uncle, let it wait until to-morrow! Let me speak to you again first! I can't do it now."

"You can't? That means you won't! You'll disobey the old man now he's dying; you never dared before. Mrs. White, Mrs. White! This girl won't obey me now I'm ill. But she shall—she shall!"

His voice rose to a thin, angry scream, pitiful to hear. His face was distorted with pain and rage, and he shook his thin claw-like hands at the trembling girl. Mrs. White hastened to the rescue; she took him in her arms like a child, and drew the coverings round him.

"Miss Lucy," she entreated, "for Heaven's sake, please your uncle. You've always been the best of girls to him, and this isn't the time to cross him. I'm sure Miss Lucy will do what you wish, sir, when she understands."

"He wants me to be married, Mrs. White, this very evening; and how can I, when he is so ill? Tell him that he will be better to-morrow; beg him to let me wait a day or two."

"I sha'n't be better to-morrow," cried the old man. "I shall be dead! But I can't die without seeing it done, and I won't! She wants to kill me first, and oh, she's doing it! This pain is doing it!"

And he began to cry and moan in a paroxysm of pain, mixed with piteous,

childish complaints that he could not write himself, and Lucy would not write for him.

"For pity's sake, Miss Lucy, do write!" pleaded Mrs. White again. "I know it's no time for marrying; but you can't help it, and no bad luck will come to you for pleasing your poor uncle—only a blessing. Write as he wishes, there's a dear girl."

Lucy could stand it no longer; she was desperate.

"Very well, uncle," she cried; "I will write. I am going to do it now."

"And send it at once," he gasped.

"I will," she answered resolutely.

No escape now, no possibility of evasion or delay. She knew what she was going to do; she was driven to it. She hurried downstairs, and wrote:

"DEAREST ALAN,—If you wish to marry me, come this evening at seven o'clock, and bring Mr. Wilson, who is prepared to perform the ceremony. Uncle has got a special licence ready. By his orders, I am writing for Mr. Picton to come and witness it. Let me have a line to say you have received this.—Your own,  
LUCY."

She sent this to Kensington's chambers by the page-boy, with orders to give it only into Yorkshire's own hands, and to bring back an answer; and to Mr. Picton she sent a note by another messenger, simply requesting him to call at seven o'clock, if possible, as her uncle was much worse, and wished to see him on important business.

Poor Lucy had scarcely formed a plot; she had had neither time nor coolness to arrange details; all that she thought of was to bring Yorkshire, and not Brixton, on the spot at the important moment, and then to trust to accident, or her uncle's relenting. At any rate, no compulsion could marry her to Brixton if he was not there to be married.

By six o'clock she held in her hand a pencilled scrap from Yorkshire:

"I will not fail, my own."

An hour later she was waiting in her room, dressed in white, and deadly pale. She sat in a low chair, not moving, scarcely thinking, only listening and waiting. If anything depended on her quickness and adroitness now, it would be lost; she was exhausted with agitation. She felt like one of those trembling masses of white froth which are hurried down a broken stream; they cannot stop or turn back, they must drift downward, and be stranded somewhere

at last; but who knows that they do not dread being caught and torn by the drooping brambles, and long to be floated gently against some grassy bank? She could not steer her course any farther, but perhaps this terrible stream of events would cast her to-night on her lover's bosom.

A quiet ring at the door-bell sounded like a trumpet-peal in her ears. In a minute Mrs. White entered, drew her cold hand inside her arm, and led her away.

As they reached the door of the sick-room, two figures, one black, one white, came up the stairs. The bridegroom and the clergyman stopped to let the bride precede them into the chamber of death and marriage. She went up to the bedside, and kissed her uncle's forehead. He was drawing breath with difficulty, and the audible gasps were half moans; his face was sunken and changed; the Shadow was very near now, and very dark.

Lucy shuddered as she kissed this strange face that once she had known; there was no response, but his dim eyes followed her white figure, as Mrs. White led her to the other end of the room. He had taken a dislike to light, so that the only illumination came from two candles, placed on a little white-covered table, as far as possible from his bed. Behind this Mr. Wilson took his stand, Alan and Lucy standing in front of it, with their backs to the bed. Mrs. White at once returned to the bedside, to catch any low whisper of her dying master. On the other side sat the hired attendant, and they two were the only witnesses of the marriage. Mr. Picton had neither come nor answered Lucy's note.

The strange, hurried, miserable service began. Mr. Wilson, spurred to haste by the warning of every loud-drawn breath from Mr. Marston, and very much embarrassed by his own short sight and the feeble light, cut short everything that could be shortened.

The bride stood and knelt mechanically, and scarcely breathed her choked responses; the bridegroom's steadier tones were hushed by awe. The loudest voice was that which startled them all when the question was asked: "Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?" for then Mr. Marston struggled to sit up, and, with an effort that was almost a shout, exclaimed: "I do!" He dropped back, moaning with pain, and the shocked clergyman hurried on still faster.

In five minutes Alan and Lucy were

married. Then Alan laid one kiss upon his wife's brow before he took again the hand that was now his own, and led her to be blessed by the dying man.

Mr. Marston feebly lifted one hand as he heard them draw near, and unclosed once more the eyes whose lids were now so heavy; and then a strange look came into them—a look which overspread his face—a look of wonder and dismay. With a sort of spasm he raised himself off the pillows, and cried:

"Why—who—which—which——"

Did he die in asking once more the yet unanswered question—Which of them?

### CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

#### BEDFORD.

A LITTLE way beyond the spot where old Watling Street enters the county of Bedford there is a crossway where the street meets the still older British trackway known as Icknield Street, and here, or herabouts, long ago, a wayside settlement sprang up, which in time became a mart and market-place for passing travellers and traders, as well as for the dwellers in the country round about. From its situation on the verge of a long range of chalky downs, the town received the Saxon name of Dunstable—meaning the staple, or market, on the down. Hard times came upon Dunstable when the land was overrun with Danes, and the district about became a debatable land, across which only strong and well-armed bands could pass with safety. Then the great highways almost fell out of use, and became neglected and deserted, so that all about, the land relapsed into forest. Then Dunstable became the haunt of outlaws and predatory bands, who took what they could get, either from Saxon or from Dane. And thus arose the legend of a robber, Duno, who stabled his horses in the deserted town, like any modern Dick Turpin.

Old customs and certain franchises, which survived long enough to be recorded, although they have now altogether disappeared, testify to the ancient importance of Dunstable, though it may be a question whether the town, on its present site, existed before the reign of Henry the First, who invited settlers to the spot by promises of immunities and privileges, and founded here the priory of Black Canons, which for ages was alike the pride and plague of the burgesses of the town, and

whose mutilated minster is now the parish-church. Tradition, indeed, assigns the site of old Dunstable to the hamlet of Houghton, close by, and attributes the migration of its inhabitants to the building of a royal pleasure-house, the site of which, pleasant and sunny, is still commemorated in the name of a field called the King's Mead. Priory and palace together may have drawn the inhabitants to the new settlement, although it is now difficult to realise that this quiet country town should have been the resort of kings and courtiers, of great barons, with their brilliant trains, or of magnificent prelates, with their households rivalling those of princes. Yet so it was. Kings and princes were continually dropping in unexpectedly upon the Prior of Dunstable; sometimes there would be a synod going on, and sometimes a tournament; while, although the burgesses of the town and the denizens of the priory were always quarrelling, and very often coming to actual blows, there was something about all this that suited people at the time, and kept life from stagnation. And of all that went on in those mediæval days we have an interesting and contemporary record in the chronicles of the priory, which, from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, afford a lively picture of the daily life of town and convent.

The chronicler of Dunstable saw the funeral train of Queen Eleanor as with solemn pomp it passed through the town on its way to Westminster. He noted how the bier was placed in the middle of the market-place, while the King's Chancellor and the great nobles agreed as to the precise spot where it should rest for the night, and marked out the same with due reverence. He saw the building of the lofty cross that was raised upon the spot at the King's charge, the prior of the convent assisting, and sprinkling each successive stage with holy water. The cross was destroyed in the civil wars by the Parliamentary soldiers.

Then there is a glimpse of the character of the future King, the second Edward, in the chronicler's lament over his reckless extortion when living in the neighbourhood. Two hundred messes a day were not enough for his kitchen, and he paid for nothing; but his servants took everything, and even the cheese and eggs that were brought to market.

In the neighbourhood of Dunstable, great earthworks rise from the hillsides, and bear a silent testimony to the power of

paces which have now passed away. A huge enclosure near Dunstable bears the name of the Maiden's Bower, or Maiden Castle, and due west, at the distance of only a few miles, is to be seen Toternhoe Castle, a great circular rampart with a double ditch, towering from the extreme point of a high down. As for Maiden Castle, the name has given rise to many curious surmises as to its origin and purpose; but the name is often given to earthworks and old trackways, whose origin may have puzzled our Saxon forefathers as much as ourselves; and the real meaning of the name in this connection—if it ever had any—has not been clearly made out.

To the right and left of Dunstable, Luton and Leighton Buzzard form distinct stages on the old highways, without having acquired much distinctive interest except as centres of straw-plait and bonnet manufacture. This last indeed is said to have been introduced into the neighbourhood by James the First, who brought hither some of the workpeople originally introduced by his mother Mary, from her beloved France. But to judge from the beauty of the church, and the richness of its monuments, the district must have been wealthy and prosperous before the days of the Stuarts. Indeed, the best part of the church dates from the Wars of the Roses, and its founder and benefactor was one Lord Wenlock, who first taking one side and then the other, took the losing side at last so half-heartedly that he was killed in Tewkesbury market-place by the Earl of Somerset for holding back from the battle.

As for Leighton Buzzard, which may once have been more euphonious as Leighton Beaudesert, it is notable chiefly for a fine market-cross, one of the best of those which survived the bitter Puritanism of the civil wars. To the northward, Toddington once boasted a noble mansion built in the reign of Elizabeth, by Sir Henry Cheney, subsequently occupied by Lord Strafford, and in which the Duke of Monmouth is reported to have hidden after the battle of Sedgemoor. But the house has long since been dismantled, although some picturesque remains of it are still to be found.

The great house of the district is Woburn Abbey, the seat of the Dukes of Bedford, originally belonging to the Cistercians, and founded by Hugh de Balbeck in the twelfth century. But nothing monastic now remains about the

present stately classic mansion of the Russells.

The Russells were originally of Dorsetshire, and, according to the historians of that county, of a family that had long been of note in one way or the other. But as their genealogy before their rise to greatness is more or less conjectural, it may be permitted to doubt whether they were not originally emigrants from the opposite shores of France. Anyhow, the name was well known at Caen in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and one Jean Roussel was a celebrated professor in the University of Caen—when Henry the Second of France and Diana of Poitiers were magnificently entertaining the great nobles of Normandy—their buffets groaning, we may imagine, with that wonderful *Henri-deux* ware, with the interlaced crescents, which is now priceless in value.

Anyhow, John Russell, of Dorsetshire, was of quite different mould to the ordinary Dorset squire; a young man who had travelled and seen the world, and who spoke several European languages, when one stormy day in the beginning of the sixteenth century, a strange vessel in distress made for Weymouth Harbour, and presently was moored in safety to its quay. There were great people on board, hidalgos of Spain, and counts of the Low Country; and, greater than any of these, the Archduke Philip, son of the Emperor Maximilian, a potentate whose dignity was recognised even in Dorsetshire, by his marriage with the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, the heir of Spain and the Netherlands. The stiff sou'-wester that blew the Archduke into Weymouth was the favouring breeze of the Russells. Young Russell was the only man who could make out the lingo of these foreigners; and with his courtly and pleasing manners he so won the heart of the young Archduke, that when a mandate came to escort the strangers to the royal presence at Windsor, where the King sat, no doubt counting over his money, and wondering whether he could make anything out of the princely flotsam, John Russell was selected as interpreter and companion.

Mr. Russell arrived at Court at an opportune moment. The King had a keen eye and judgment for able men, and there was urgent need of such to carry out the new policy of the Crown, and give the coup-de-grâce to the old feudal nobility. And thus Russell found employment at Court, and speedy promotion. As soldier, councillor,

plenipotentary, secret agent, Russell made himself useful to the Tudor Henrys with a versatility that recalls the traits of one of the best known of his descendants. It used to be said of Earl Russell, the more famous Lord John of the stirring political era of the Reform Bill, that he would have had no hesitation in taking command of the Channel Fleet on occasion, and he might well have been encouraged in such a step by the example of his ancestor—now commanding a fleet, or again the leader of an army, or watching the progress of events as at the battle of Pavia, when he was an interested spectator of the combat in which the King of France and all his chivalry were humbled to the dust.

With all this versatile power, the first Lord Russell had, happily for his descendants, an excellent and omnivorous appetite for lands and lordships. His first great acquisition was a grant of part of the forfeited estates of the unhappy Duke of Buckingham, and then by a fortunate marriage with the heiress of the Sapcotes, he became the possessor of Cheney in Buckinghamshire, from which he took his first title, and where are stored the bones of himself and many of his descendants. But Russell's great opportunity came at the dissolution of the abbey.

Among all those who divided the spoils of the abbey, Russell came out with the richest share; probably because he had the fullest information as to the value of those monastic estates which were then to be had almost for the asking. And far above the rest was his success in keeping what he had once gained possession of. Many of the first winners in the lottery of distribution feared the future too much, and parted with what they had got so easily for the inadequate market-prices of the day. But Russell had the courage to keep what he had got, and to go on asking for more. It was not till the death of Henry the Eighth and the accession of his son that Lord Russell acquired Woburn, with large estates in Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire. But long before this the spoils of a priory at Tavistock had given the family a firm footing in Devonshire, and the houses of the Friars Minors in Exeter afforded them a valuable interest in that ancient city. Thorney Abbey, gathered in the same capacious net, proved the nucleus of landed possessions in Cambridgeshire. Then the priory of Castle Hymal in Northamptonshire, and part of the spoils of the abbey of St. Albans and Mount Grace, with a

share in the confiscated estates of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John, added to the territorial greatness of the Russells; and, to crown all, that modest piece of garden ground was added—that pleasant sunny garden in the Strand, which is still known as Covent Garden.

Great as was the value of the estates thus acquired, that value was rather in expectation than actual possession. The Church estates were burdened with pensions, with debts incurred by the Churchmen; while the tenants mostly held beneficial leases under easy rents, and methods of raising rentals upon an occupying class were still unaccustomed and dangerous. And thus the King gave away what had cost him nothing, and brought him but little profit, and would have been difficult in any case to turn into hard cash, which was the greatest need of monarchs in those days—as perhaps indeed it may be now. And the gift, after all, was not without its dangers. The reaction which actually occurred at the accession of Mary might reasonably have been foreseen, and the estates which were acquired so easily might have been expected eventually to cost their possessor dear. Superstition, too, was strong on the subject, and an evil destiny was supposed to follow those who had seized for their own use that which had been devoted to the service of God and His saints. Many curious instances of the proverbial ill-luck that attended the possessors of Church lands might be brought together. But the history of the Russell family would seem to prove the superstition baseless. The family which profited most of all by the plunder of the abbey has held its course with almost unalloyed prosperity, without losing a tittle of its possessions or a single one of its patiently acquired honours.

The dangerous moment of reaction brought no harm, but rather good for Lord Russell and his possessions. For he had the political sagacity to support the cause of Mary from the first. And, convinced as was the new Queen on questions of Church government, she found that the lands of the abbey were too firmly gripped in secular hands to be now disturbed. Thus Lord Russell, in spite of his antecedents, grew in favour with the Queen, and was chosen—now an old man—as one of the Commissioners to escort Philip of Spain from his dominions to his bride in England. About this honourable employment many strange thoughts must have passed through the grey old noble's head, seeing that his

first charge, when a humble merchant's son of Weymouth, had been the care of the Archduke Philip, the grandfather of the arrogant King who was coming to marry his royal mistress.

In such a steadfast manner—steadfast to its own interests—while sometimes appearing to veer and change in its political relations, the house of Bedford has safely steered through the storms of one century after another. Sometimes a younger son has departed from the judicious mean in the way of enthusiasm and advanced opinions, as that Lord William Russell who lost his head for prematurely plotting the subversion of the Stuarts; but the heads of the family have always shown a sturdy consistency in their rôle of many-acred Dukes, coveting rather the solid benefits of territorial supremacy than the fleeting honours of political warfare. Perhaps the most characteristic of these Dukes, and the one who has made Woburn most famous, was he who instituted the Woburn sheep-shearing, of which a clever mezzotint may be met with sometimes in print-shop windows.

The time is the early part of the present century, when Hessians, long-waisted coats, and voluminous neckties were in the ascendant. There is an air of homely distinction in the group of horsemen and pedestrians who are gathered about the sturdy Duke, and even the man in shirt-sleeves, who wields the shears over the half-shorn sheep, seems to have a complacent sense of the dignity of his office. The sheep are everything in fleece and frame that is worthy of the occasion. In the background a four-horse drag has just pulled up in the stockyard, and more long-waisted gentlemen are on the roof, with a glimpse of the short-waisted frocks and expanded bonnets that are no longer unfamiliar to the present generation.

Close by Woburn is the rival park of Ampthill, with its venerable oaks and some remains of the old castle, once a royal seat, where Catherine of Aragon retired when dismissed from her husband's court. The grand mansion of modern time stands on lower ground, looking over the fine spacious park which joins the grounds of Houghton in one corner; Houghton that was built by Mary, Countess of Pembroke—"Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother"—and some portions of which remain as a picturesque ruin. Under a pear-tree in Houghton Park Sir Philip Sidney is said to have written part of his

Arcadia. The memory of Lord Holland, a later possessor of the estate, is preserved in a beautiful grove of lime-trees, which he planted for the benefit of the inhabitants of Ampthill.

A little to the south lies Wrest Park, once the seat of the historic family of the Greys, Earls of Kent, and at Hilton, close by, the parish church is rich in the monuments of this ancient race. Southill lies in the same line of country, noted in the memoirs of the past century as the residence of Samuel Whitbread, and here lies Byng, the admiral who was shot after a trial by court-martial "*pour encourager les autres*." Sutton and Potton may be remembered as the object of a curious rhyming grant from John of Gaunt to an ancestor of the Burgoynes. And Sandy, but an insignificant village in these days, is surrounded by ancient camps and entrenchments, and is supposed to have once been an important British city, and afterwards a Roman station; while many finds of Romano-British antiquities in the neighbourhood give countenance to the supposition.

The pleasant sunny town of Biggleswade, entirely modern in its general appearance, has still a fine ancient church, and has no doubt long been the seat of a considerable population.

From this point the ancient highway and the modern railway run directly to Bedford. The ancient bridge which here crossed the River Ouse, has been replaced by a structure of the present century. The old bridge formed the subject of many pleasant old prints and drawings, such as those which illustrate Grose's *Antiquities*, which show a many-arched bridge, with, half-way across, a pair of gateways facing each other, the rooms over which formed the old town gaol.

Various derivations have been given of the name of Bedford. Some give a literal version of the matter, and will have it that here were lodgings by the ford, something in the way of the modern coffee-shop, with "*Beds*" stuck up in the window. "*My lodging is in the cold ground*," would have been an appropriate device for the traveller of those days, for there is nothing to show the existence of any special accommodation for wayfarers, although the earthworks and entrenchments of the castle hill show that here was an important strategical point in early warfare. And it is in this last direction that we must look for the origin of the name, which name is given in

the Saxon chronicle as Bedcanford, Bedicanford, Baedanford, with other variations—as much as to say the Bedician or be-dug about ford, the fort protected by ditch and rampart. Many a fierce hand-to-hand fight has been fought about those green mounds between Saxon and Dane when the mastery of the valley of the Ouse was in question; and the position was important enough as guarding the line of communication between north and south, to be occupied by a strong Norman castle after the Conquest.

The story of the capture and destruction of this castle of Bedford, in the reign of Henry the Third, gives an interesting glimpse into the manners of the period, as it is told by the chronicler of Dunstable Priory, who seems to have been an eyewitness of the siege. During the contests of King John with his barons, the King had given the castle of Bedford to a devoted follower, a man after his own heart, one Fulk, who is called by the local historians De Brent, but whose proper title a reference to the original chronicle seems to show was De Bréauté, from a Norman village not far from Fécamp. This ferocious son of the Northmen made of his fortress a true ogre's castle, keeping all the neighbourhood round in inquietude and alarm, and annexing lands and tenements according to his pleasure. In the reign of the new King order was re-established, and the course of justice became more regular. Those whom Fulk had injured began to take the law against him. It is recorded that at one time this bold baron of Bedford had as many as thirty verdicts against him under writs of "novel disseisin," each with a fine of a hundred pounds—a total sum which it was quite impossible for him to pay, and which he was fully determined should not be levied upon his belongings. Some sympathy may at this day be felt for a man so worried by lawyers, but it must be remembered that in those days the King's Justice was the only resort of a poor man against a powerful oppressor, and that redress was not always sought in vain.

Fulk, however, was determined not to be distrained upon. He put his castle in a state of defence, and, by way of reprisals, the assizes sitting in the neighbourhood just then, he sent his brother with an armed party, who seized one of the Judges in his tribunal—the other made his escape—and brought him in as a prisoner. This was an insult to the regal power which could not be overlooked, and thus there

was a general levy made in the adjoining counties, and materials were collected for a regular siege of the outlaw's castle.

The methods of warfare had changed very little from those of the early Roman Empire, and thus the account we get of the siege might apply with a total change of scene and persons to one of Cæsar's attacks on a Gallic fortress. "On the east side were one petronel with two mangonels which duly attacked the keep; and on the western side were two mangonels which went for the old tower; and one mangonel on the south side, and another on the north, which two, in the wall next them, made two breaches. Besides these were two wooden machines, raised above the height of tower and castle for the work of the slingers and pioneers. There were also many machines in which both slingers and cross-bowmen were concealed. Then there was a machine called Cattus, under which the miners worked while they dug under the foundations of castle and keep. The castle was taken by four assaults. First was taken the barbican, where four or five foreigners were killed. In the second assault was taken the outer bailey, where many were slain, in which our people got horses, with harness, bridles, and stirrups. Oxen, also, and pigs they got—*Bacones et porcos vivos*," adds the chronicler with a relish, who had, no doubt, enjoyed a rasher of the bacon—with numbers of other things. "Also they burned houses full of *Blado et Fueno*"—words which are not to be found in a Latin dictionary, but which are a curious adaptation of the *Bled et Foin*, corn and hay, of Norman French. "In which attack many of our men perished, and ten of ours, trying to scale the keep, were taken prisoners."

In the meantime the miners had been silently at work under the foundations of the keep, driving their galleries here and there, which were propped up temporarily with timber. And then on the Eve of the Assumption, about the time for vespers, when the besiegers had gathered for a general assault, and the besieged were sullenly manning the battlements of the keep, the miners set fire to the woodwork, so that all the habitable part of the keep was filled with black vapour, and then suddenly crack went the tower, showing a great gaping rent, whence gushed volumes of black smoke.

We may imagine the shout that went up from the ranks of the besiegers, the oaths of the other side, and the shrieks from

the womenfolk in the devoted tower. With the walls tumbling about their ears, the garrison could hold out no longer, and Fulk's wife and all the rest of the women, with the prisoners taken during the siege, came forth to beg the King's mercy for the garrison. Scant mercy was shown the fighting men, of whom eighty or more were hanged as so many noxious animals. But Fulk, the greatest criminal of all, escaped with his life, although kept under the threat of execution till he had given up his other castles of Plumpton and Stokes Curci, and all the silver plate, and the gold, and the money which he had no doubt buried in the earth, and which, had he been forthwith dispatched, might have remained as prize for some future treasure-seeker.

As for the castle, it was well-nigh demolished in the siege, and afterwards the outer bail was filled up, the crushed and dangerous ruins of the keep were levelled with the ground, and the inner bail given as a residence to William de Beauchamp, whose ancestors had held the castle in former days. The inner bail is now a bowling-green, and not one stone of the old castle stands upon another, but the strong earthworks still remain in evidence.

This siege of Bedford Castle would have further interest for us if it could be shown that the memory of it was preserved in the neighbourhood till the seventeenth century, and that thus John Bunyan got the notion of Doubting Castle, the hold of Giant Despair, and its destruction by the Pilgrims.

For here we are in Bunyan's country, and the scenery about no doubt is the scenery of that wonderful Progress which has taken such a hold upon mankind that there is hardly a language, civilised or uncivilised, into which it has not been translated. Surely the Valley of Humiliation is hereabouts. "It is fat ground, and as you see consisteth much in meadows; and if a man were to come here in the summer-time, he might see that which would be delightful to him. 'Behold how green this valley is, also how beautiful with lilies.'"

Bunyan was born at the little hamlet of Elstow close by, his father being a brazier or tinman of the dark race, who are not gipsies, although not unlike them in complexion. About Bedford the greater part of his life was passed; many years of it in an easy kind of imprisonment in the town gaol, where he made tagged laces for a livelihood, and wrote the immortal Pilgrim's Progress — an imprisonment

which permitted of his roaming about the country, preaching and holding forth. Here stood the old Meeting where he first attended the ministry of godly Mr. Giffard, who had once been a Royal officer, given to all kinds of profanity. And here, no doubt, could he have had his will, he would have died and been buried instead of in the heart of grim London. "Some also have wished that the next way to their Father's house were here, that they might be troubled no more with either hills or mountains to go over; but the way is the way, and there's an end."

## LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNN," ETC., ETC.

### CHAPTER XLIII.

So when Colonel Wickham set off for London, Edie and her father started for Bournemouth; arrived there in due course by easy stages; ensconced themselves in the most comfortable room of the most comfortable hotel, only for Edie to discover the first thing the next morning that Bournemouth did not suit her "the least bit in the world, and that Torquay or some other quay somewhere else was the only place for her to get well in." Off to Torquay they went without delay, only for Miss Edie to find when she got there that it was "a wretched hole, a place to die in, not get well in. Scarborough or some other nice cold bracing place was the one that would bring her strength back soonest."

So up to the north they went next. Scarborough in due course was tried, and after that a succession of watering-places, all more or less with the same result. This one was too hot, that too cold; this stood too high, that lay too low; till at last Edie, nestling up to her father, and looking very little the better for her successive changes of climate, informed him that she had made the discovery that after all what she needed was not so much change of air as change of scene, and that London, where everyone was always cheerful, and things were perpetually in motion, was the one place in all the world that would make her strong and well again.

"I am triste, bored, wretched, papa; I never thought the sea so melancholy before, and I am sure you look wretched too! You'll be glad enough to get to your club, and have a chat with your old friends."

This was what she said with that easy,



light, tripping tongue of hers, but right down in the depths of her heart lay the thought which not even to herself would she put into words: "I shall see Phil once more—we shall be certain to meet somewhere or other. I will look right up into his eyes, and one glance will tell me whether he is happy or not."

But it may be doubted whether at that precise moment Phil himself would have been able to answer the question which Edie was going to solve with a glance, had it been put to him in so many words.

Possibly if he had spoken out his thoughts he might have said:

"What in Heaven's name has happiness to do with the matter? Does a man going head foremost over a cliff ask himself whether he enjoys what he is doing? Or if the end of the world had come, should we look at each other and ask if we felt giddy or otherwise?"

After all Phil was about right. It would have been as sensible to go to a lunatic and ask him how he liked being mad, as ask a man in love how he enjoyed his love-fever.

About the time Colonel Wickham started on a brief visit to London, this love-fever was drawing to a crisis and fell but little short of delirium. Sleeping or waking, dreaming or thinking, but one face haunted him now—Ellinor Yorke's. Her eyes, let him be where he would, within four walls or outside of them, were for ever looking up into his, her voice for ever filling his ears.

Little by little had this love-fever grown upon him. At first, with his heart sore and raw from Edie's abrupt dismissal, he had sought Ellinor's society simply to kill thought and make laggard time speed a little faster. Later on, when in the midst of her own overwhelming anguish, Ellinor had turned upon him and told him they were "quits" now, and might shake hands as heartless flirts, he had been seized with a quick penitence, and it had seemed to him that a lifetime of self-sacrifice could barely atone for the part he had played. So he began to offer his sacrifice, in his own fashion, by devoting himself, morning, noon, and night, to Ellinor's whims and wishes, and then, hey! presto! with the suddenness of a dream-change, or the wave of a wizard's wand, the altar, the knife, and the fire disappeared, and the would-be victim found himself seated, crowned with flowers, at the feast, enjoying the wine and viands with the best.

In other words, he had scarcely begun

his long mornings of dalliance and devotion to Ellinor than he found there was less of purgatory than of heaven in them. But it was a heaven that might best be described as a wild, whirling, bewildering now of mad heart-throbs, brain-achings, and high-beating pulses. It knew no past; Edie, Stanham, the old happy days, were as dead to him as the ashes of last night's fire. And it knew no future; that, in the nature of things, was a great, dreary, empty blank.

Colonel Wickham, when he succeeded, in pursuance of his lately-formed plan, in unearthing Phil in London, was struck by the young fellow's changed and haggard appearance. Phil had left his old hotel and had taken rooms within a stone's-throw of Grosvenor Square. Colonel Wickham had to call again and again, before he succeeded in finding him at home.

"Where have you been morning, noon, and night, Phil, when I've looked you up?" he asked.

Phil's answer was ready enough:

"When a man is engaged to be married," he said, "he is more often to be found in the lady's home than in his own."

"Then it's all finally, irretrievably arranged and settled?" asked the Colonel, his face growing grave and frowning.

"As finally and irretrievably as such things can be settled," answered Phil in a voice more suited to announce a death than an impending marriage.

The Colonel sighed heavily.

"Then what I came to say must remain unspoken," he said, and throughout their short interview that morning not one allusion near or distant was made to little Edie, though all other events at Stanham were freely discussed between them. Phil had no inclination now to mention her name kindly or cruelly, passionately or sarcastically, as at their previous meeting; and Colonel Wickham could as soon have thought of crying "victory" over a snared wood-pigeon as have flaunted the tidings of his own engagement to Edie in the dismissed suitor's ears.

Phil, taking, as he had before, the fact for granted, noted his reticence, and said to himself:

"What a gentleman he is! No wonder Edie fell in love with him. Look at me beside him! I'm like a cur to a thoroughbred."

Possibly others might not have passed quite so harsh a judgment on Phil as he did on himself, but certainly, for the nonce,

he was as much unlike himself as a drunkard is to the man sober.

It is also possible, however, that Phil would not have felt so keen an appreciation of his uncle's high-breeding if his own hopes and wishes had not now set in in an opposite direction.

There could be but little fear of uncle and nephew posing as rivals now.

#### CHAPTER XLIV.

EASTER-TIDE that year found one and all of the actors in this soon-to-be-played-out drama in comfortable London quarters, each bent upon carrying out some small plan of their own conceiving, which they doubted not would be for the benefit of all concerned.

As, for instance, the Squire.

"By Jingo!" he said to himself, as he opened his eyes under the chintz canopy of one of the best bedrooms of the Alexandra, "I'm heartily glad little Edie took it into her head to come up to London after all. It'll do more towards putting things straight between her and Phil than any amount of letter-writing could. Of course it's all humbug about Phil being engaged to Ellinor. He's no more engaged to her than I am. A girl of her ambition is bound to marry a Duke at the least. Why, even Winterdowne might ask her and get a 'No' for his pains. And as for Phil, the idea's ridiculous. No doubt they are carrying on a desperate flirtation together—I'll back Ellinor at that game. But, also, not a doubt it's a game Phil would be heartily glad to get out of, if Edie would only hold out the slightest hope or encouragement to him. Well, I'll take good care they see something of each other before we go back, and I'll get hold of Phil on the sly, and tell him how much I should prefer him to his uncle for a son-in-law; and I'll reason with Miss Edie when she's a little bit stronger, and tell her to see where her whimsicalness is driving poor Phil. Little puss! Who the deuce she takes after I don't know. Not her mother, for certain; she had as sweet and tractable a temper as a woman could have. And as for me—well, I don't think I flatter myself if I say I'm always ready and willing to listen to reason."

Also Edie, looking over her blind across the green acres of Hyde Park at this precise moment, laid her plans with a more systematic precision than she had done for many a long day past.

"Of course, I'm bound to come upon

Phil somewhere or other, and I sha'n't content myself with looking up in his face—though that will tell me all I want to know—but I'll say right out to him: 'Phil, are you happy?' and when he says—as, of course, he will—'I'm as happy as a man can well be, Edie,' I shall say, 'I'm delighted to hear it. I did not think Ellinor was a girl to make any man happy, but of course I was mistaken, and I hope you'll get happier and happier every day you live.' And then I shall feel the whole matter quite at an end, and I'll have a talk with Colonel Wickham, and tell him I don't see any necessity for our being engaged any longer, and I'll go back to Stanham, and begin all my old life over again, and never give another thought to Phil or Ellinor either."

And these were Colonel Wickham's thoughts, as he sat with idle folded hands and morning newspaper unopened beside him in his old-fashioned hotel off the Strand:

"Poor little Edie! Poor little darling! When once I've seen you and Phil together, I shall know in a moment whether your love for each other is quite dead, or if there is the ghost of a chance of your old happiness coming back to you. If there is, may Heaven help me to crush my own hopes once more. If there is not, no living soul shall rob me of my young love. Naught but death shall take her from me."

As for Phil and Ellinor, what little of consecutive thought they indulged in in those days must have run somewhat in this fashion:

"The world ends for us in a month or two. Not one single day or hour can we add to its length, let us try as we will. Therefore, let us get our quantum of sweetness from every minute that passes; let us pack each sixty seconds with as much of delight as it will hold, so that, when all are told, we may look in each other's faces and say, 'Come now what come may, we have each of us had our day.'"

Society wondered over the doings of these two young people a good deal, and acknowledged that its estimate of their characters had been weakly erroneous, for they were each acting in a manner directly opposed to any that had been prognosticated of them. What did it matter? There was that in Phil's and Ellinor's heart which effectually deafened their ears to society's small-talk. A man with his feet on a sinking ship scarcely troubles to ask himself what sort of a figure he cuts to

spectators on shore. Ellinor and Phil knew only too well how near the water-line they stood now.

Yet not so much as by a hair's-breadth was the least of society's conventions infringed.

When the arrangement of the establishment in Grosvenor Square began to be talked over, Ellinor insisted that a chaperon for herself would be an indispensable part of it.

"She must be a lady, of course, and also a quiet person, who never speaks unless she is spoken to," she said with decision. "She must also be a distinctly ugly person, not vulgarly ugly—that, of course, I could not tolerate—but grandly, picturesquely, artistically ugly, with a fine sense of colour."

"I think you had better undertake the finding of her, Nell," said Uncle Hugh. "It would be a little beyond me."

"That goes without saying," acquiesced Ellinor. "There's not a man living who could understand what I should require my duenna to be. By-the-bye, Uncle Hugh, I think she may as well be a Spaniard, with no knowledge whatever of the English tongue."

"My dear, how do you mean to hold communication with her? Have you Spanish oozing out of your finger-tips?"

"Oh, I shall not object to her having a smattering of French. That will answer all purposes. And she must have a handsome—really handsome salary. I could not tolerate an ill-paid person about me."

"I suppose that also goes without saying?" said Uncle Hugh dryly.

"Well, seeing she will only need to be engaged to the end of the year, and this is April, I suppose it does," answered Ellinor in an even voice.

Her words, "to the end of the year," sent Uncle Hugh away shuddering. She could always do this when she pleased. By a sort of unspoken etiquette no allusions to Ellinor's state of health were ever made in her presence by Uncle Hugh, Phil, or Lucy.

As to the outer world, it was still in complete ignorance of the sentence of death which had been read over the head of

the reigning beauty. The polite, discreet physician whom she had consulted in the winter months knew too well what was expected of him to let one syllable on the matter escape his lips.

So in due course the "grandly, picturesquely, artistically ugly duenna with a fine sense of colour" was found and engaged. She was also—as might have been expected from the assiduity Ellinor showed in the matter—a Spaniard having but a slight knowledge of the French tongue, and none whatever of the English. She was likewise a discreet person who quickly found out what duties were expected of her, and performed them admirably, leaving Uncle Hugh free to follow his old club career of card-parties and *recherché* dinners to his heart's content. Her name matters little, she left no mark on the lives of these people with whom she was thrown for a short time into contact. She was just a useful third in Ellinor's daily drives in the park. With the neutral-tinted Lucy beside her, and the "picturesquely, grandly ugly" senora facing her, Ellinor's beauty showed—as she had known it would—to brilliant advantage.

Also the duenna proved herself a useful unlistening fourth at the small dinner-table at which Phil had become now a daily guest. A fourth to whom no one paid any more heed than they did to the big-leaved, glossy india-rubber plant, which they had found standing in the drawing-room window of the furnished house they had hired, but which Ellinor had speedily had removed to a dark corner, requesting Lucy to give it a little water now and then.

"For you know, dear," she had said, "it is a sweetly poetic idea for you to be watering flowers in the shade. For me to do so would be an utter incongruity."

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal  
CONDUCTED BY  
**CHARLES DICKENS**

No. 856. NEW SERIES.      SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 1885.      PRICE TWOPENCE.

## "THE FLOWER OF DOOM;"

OR, THE CONSPIRATOR.

A SHORT SERIAL STORY.

By MISS BETHAM-EDWARDS,

Author of "Kitty," "Love and Mirage," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER XI. WEDDED.

IT never occurred to Bernarda that because her marriage was to take place under extraordinary circumstances, and because she was no longer in the rosebud stage of existence, she should discard the beautiful and symbolic dress expected of brides. She was about to give herself in all her whiteness of soul to this man she adored, to celebrate an act solemn and fateful always, but doubly, trebly, in her own case. She trembled as she glanced towards the future. Into the depths of Edgeworth's soul she dared not look. But he loved her; he was going to become her husband. Mixed with the wild exultation his confession had brought her, a ray of hope therefore gilded her marriage-day. So she dressed herself in the most perfect and appropriate gown to be had, and marvellously did it heighten her mature, stately beauty. She felt half-inclined to lay aside the flower she had worn all these years; the pansy could no longer have the same significance, she said, since Edgeworth loved her. As far as his affection was concerned he had made reparation and healed the wounds made long years ago. Yet, partly from habit, and partly from a strange feeling that now possessed her, a conviction, presentiment—she knew not by what name to call it—that her favourite flower was still connected in some occult way with her destiny, she decided to wear it still. There were magnificent roses of her bridegroom's sending, and a myrtle wreath for her dark hair, but the

discarded heartsease was finally fastened to the corsage of her white satin dress. A striking ornament it made there, looking more like a jewelled flower than a blossom destined to fade in an hour. It was one of those large, gorgeous heartseases of deepest, ruddiest crimson, with deeper markings still of purply black, and the flower fastened, her toilette was done. What a bride to dazzle the eyes of an expectant bridegroom! Bernarda now dismissed Marion and the lame girl, and awaited Edgeworth's coming alone. She clasped her hands and breathed a long silent prayer, that shaped itself into a vow. Come what might, dark days of shame, misery, and separation—let even the anguish of estrangement do its worst—she would never surrender conscience to her husband's guidance. If she could not rescue him, at least he should never drag her down to perdition.

But could she not now save him? He loved her. What influence as a wife might she not exercise? In spite of himself he might be rescued from the last infamy. On a sudden she heard his voice, and gathering up gloves and roses met him in the outer room.

In that first moment of charmed surprise Edgeworth did not so much as open his lips, but never eloquence expressed so much. He was dumbfounded, dazzled by her superb appearance, and she saw it. Such silence was sweetest flattery.

"Was ever any mortal satisfied?" he said at last. "You have dressed for me, and I would not for worlds have it otherwise; yet I am dissatisfied, because I cannot parade you before all the world."

His face beamed as he added in an undertone:

"Ah, if those dreams come true you will never lend ear to—if might brings

about right—there would be grand parts for such women as you to play, my queen.”

Bernarda smiled at him—for the life of her, unable to resist a sarcasm.

“And for men like you! But I would rather be your wife than your subject, my poor, wrong-headed Edgeworth!”

“And I would rather be your husband than my country’s king,” he added.

Then came the singing girl to say that Bernarda’s witnesses—a favourite pupil and her father—had arrived, and the tête-à-tête was interrupted for an hour or two—till all was over, and Edgeworth Edgeworth and Bernarda Burke had been declared husband and wife in due form.

“A week—a week! Why must we go back at the end of a week!” Bernarda said playfully, after two or three days’ honeymoon in a quiet spot by the sea. “Is it worth while to be married for so short a holiday as that?”

Edgeworth retorted in the same sportive vein, although she saw that such questions disturbed him:

“Must, then, a premium be put upon marriage? I always thought the contrary, and that when folks were in love they would go to the galleys for the sake of being united to each other.”

He did not, however, hold out any prospect of extending the allotted seven days, and Bernarda forbore to ask questions. She saw that he had made up his mind to live desperately, feverishly, in the present moment, not daring to look a single hour beyond.

#### CHAPTER XII. HEART TO HEART LAID BARE.

FIVE days glided by uneventfully, but on the sixth the crisis came. Bernarda had retired to rest early, leaving Edgeworth busy with letter-writing.

“You need rest, I am sure,” he said, as, coming behind him, she dropped a kiss on his shaggy poll, and murmured a sleepy good-night. “Sleep away, then, and to-morrow one more gallop across the downs.”

There was nothing unusual about his look or manner as he said this, and nothing had occurred during the day to give her any fresh uneasiness. They were walking on the edge of a precipice—she knew that well enough, but familiarity with the position made it seem less terrible.

What was her astonishment, then, on waking long after midnight, to find that

Edgeworth had never gone to bed at all! It was just this sort of catastrophe she most dreaded. Some day or other, without warning, her husband would mysteriously disappear, and the end would be bitterest sorrow and ignominy, her portion to bear alone.

Throwing on a warmly wadded crimson dressing-gown, she stole noiselessly towards the inner room where she had left him a few hours before, and gently opening the folding-doors looked in. The fire was out, and the gas turned down; but a wax-light low in the socket sufficiently lighted up Edgeworth’s dejected figure. He was not writing, only thinking, and the nature of his thoughts betokened itself in his attitude. He looked like a man whose moral and physical forces are spent, and who for a moment yields himself unresistingly to the grip of evil fortune. No remorse did the shrinking Bernarda read in his pale, rigid features, only misery and despair.

She had left a night-light burning in their bedchamber, but the feeble flame did not disturb him, nor her entrance either. As she now stood by the partially-opened folding-door she hesitated whether to speak to him or not. For the first time she saw an expression in his countenance that inspired a feeling worse than fear. It was a face she did not know! To the wife, adoring and adored, the husband’s look had become on a sudden as that of a stranger.

Had he noticed her intrusion? Was her presence unbearable to him? As she stood thus debating within herself, she caught sight of his travelling valise and other preparations for a journey. In a moment light flashed upon her mind, and she understood full well what these secret preparations for departure must mean. He had all along pledged himself to take part in some dreadful deed, and was now finally called upon to fulfil his word, or perhaps some horrid lot had fallen to his name, and he was singled out by chance of all his confederates to be the perpetrator of some unparalleled crime.

The sense of horror and the presentiment of approaching separation—separation of a nature too awful to dwell upon;—was more than she could bear. Now, if ever heart must be laid bare to heart, now, or perhaps never so long as they both should live, they must get to the very depths of each other’s nature. Friendship, with its pleasant converse; love, with its sweet inevitable familiarity, had brought them

very near together. As yet soul had not spoken to soul. Each had kept back one self from the other. There was a side of her character he did not know, whilst, in a certain sense, even the adoring husband was a stranger to her.

"You would then leave me without a word. Is your wife such a coward that she could not bear a last farewell?"

She put her arms about him now, and added in accents more pathetic and penetrating still:

"For a farewell is in store for us, I am sure. Oh, speak to me! Your face is turned to stone, yet it is the same Edgeworth—my Edgeworth! and I am innocent of blame."

He smiled, and he accepted the caress, but what a smile! Her heart sank within her, yet she remained mistress of herself.

"You innocent!" he murmured in a low, crushed voice. "What are you dreaming of? Have you not made me fond of you?"

"I have never forfeited my word," Bernarda answered, grown suddenly as white and rigid as himself. "My heart is yours—to break if you will."

"You have hoped all the same to win me and retain me. You poor, good woman," he said; "why did I marry you?"

Bernarda was kneeling now beside him. She fancied he was weeping, and in the feeling of helpless, almost childish despair that came over her, only one desperate hope seemed there to clutch at.

"There is the sea," she whispered. As she spoke she held up one hand and motioned to him to hearken to the waves beating against the shore. "Beyond it somewhere in the wide world we might surely find a home," she went on, whispering eagerly in his ear. "There is no device I would not stoop to to free you from these toils—disguise, anything. You are rich, and money can do so much! A poor fisher's boat would take us across this narrow strait. You have friends in happy France, and so have I. Let us go. Let us live harmlessly there for each other."

She clung to his knees, the proud woman for once pleading for herself. It was her love, her husband, above all, she fain would save now.

She had not realised before what a necessity his presence and his affection had become in her.

Only to have him always! That low agonised prayer in whispers told Edgeworth all.

There was not a vestige of hopefulness in the voice with which he answered her. He spoke calmly, but it was evident that his collectedness was costing him a tremendous effort.

"I cannot hide myself if I would. No loophole of escape anywhere. And now I cling to life and liberty because I love you. Good Heaven, how happy we might have been! And I am no villain born; I have a heart for natural affection and innocent pleasures like other men. A fireside with you, a child to call after its mother——"

He paused for a moment as if to dwell on the indescribably sweet, unreachable picture. Then, wholly unmaned, he went on rapidly as if he must make an end:

"These things make a man babyish—satanic—look you. They put a demon or a poltroon into him. I was about to steal away because I dared not bid you farewell, and because—because—— But no matter. Listen, wife. You will know nothing of my doings for some days—perhaps weeks—to come. Go back to your own home till I give you a sign. For, indeed, and indeed, you must let me go," he added gently as he sought to put her away from him. "Were I to turn renegade now, we should hardly be any more sure of happiness. Too late, love—love, too late!"

The word "renegade" had fallen from his lips, not her own. Bernarda shook off the lethargy of despair, and sprang to her feet. He had thrown down the gauntlet. It was for her to accept the challenge.

"Happiness!" she cried. "Do we then so little understand each other still? Is it for the sake of mere happiness I would have you break your word? Oh, Edgeworth, pardon, if for one wild moment I counselled flight! The thought of separation was more than I could bear. But now, when you are leaving me, and your looks, words, and some dim foreboding within tells me it is for ever, I cannot think of ourselves, or happiness at all. I think of your honour, the crimes with which you are about to pollute your soul, the stain, never to be washed out, with which you are about to sully your name. Do I not bear it—that name? May there not be—— But I will not think of the future, only of yourself. Is there not something that should stand before love—before country? You cannot disarm conscience. And you are one of the leaders. Your defection on moral grounds would be as an inner voice speaking to many."



She stood confronting him in her august appeal, no tears in the beautiful eyes now, no fond tremblings of the sweet voice, no feminine beatings of the heart. It was not the woman appealing to the beloved, not the wife trying blandishments with her husband, but one human heart laid bare to another—soul speaking to soul.

He answered in a cowed, almost sullen voice :

"You speak as if you knew all."

These little words filled Bernarda's mind with fresh and more terrible apprehensions. No amount of details or explanation could have made her realise so fully the awfulness of his position. And it was the awfulness, from a moral point of view, she only thought of now. On the consequences of his deeds to herself and to him she did not dwell, only on their intrinsic blackness, and the misery they would entail on others.

"Oh!" she said, throwing all her passion and nearly spent forces into one agonised supplication more, reckless now of nothing but the chance of rescuing him from the last infamy, "we are at the close of the year—the year that has brought us together. At least let this one end without crime."

He laughed bitterly.

"A week or two of delay. What good could come of it? But harm might—to ourselves, I mean."

"Do not let us think of ourselves," Bernarda said, clinging to him, no longer a monitor—a conscience—but his love, his own fond wife for one moment more. "Think of the effect your hesitation might have on others. You draw back appalled—you who are ready to lay down your life for this cause! Would not others stop short in horror? And you would have averted crime and misery; your memory would be perpetually sweet to me, if I survive you; and if not, you would at least feel that you had not broken my heart, for," she said, still clinging to him in an abandonment of love and despair, "I feel as if, however these things turn out, we are not to be together long. It is this that makes it horrible to me to lose you now, bent on what fearful deed I dare not ask, leaving me already widowed. Wickedness drives out love. I should learn, perhaps, to loathe you against my will. The Edgeworth I loved would seem dead. The Edgeworth stained with crime, how could I let him so much as come near me? Is it not something then to keep you if only for a little week—seven whole days? You love me—you consent!"

"To what?" said Edgeworth hoarsely, and no longer master of himself. "Yet," he murmured, as he held her in his arms, speaking not to her but to himself, "I am too powerful, too much of a force, too rich! None of them would dare to raise a finger against me or mine. And a man has surely a right to two weeks' truce after his wedding! I was against this time, too, from the first. My demur now will not occasion surprise. Why disturb the world's peace at Christmas—"

Bernarda listened in a tumult of wild hopes, yet with reined-in abhorrence. Black and frightful the chasm that Edgeworth's last words had opened to her.

"We are rich," he went on, gloating over the thought with almost savage exultation. "How good to have money, my Erna! Money may purchase this reprieve! But go back to bed, wife, and try to sleep. There are things not to be put into a letter, parleyings not to be entrusted to the post—you understand? I must therefore make this journey all the same."

"But not alone!" replied Bernarda.

## IN THE FLORIDA PINE WOODS.

### IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

ON the next day the "melancholy event," which was to be its great feature, and mark it with black letters in the memory of the Bartow youngsters, had a depressing effect on the Blount household. I found the house as quiet as a tomb when I crept down after breakfast in bed, feeling very giddy, and determined to visit the doctor at his drug-store before going to church.

In the middle of the corridor sat Mr. Blount, his head bare, and his back bent over a big book open upon his knees. The book was a Bible.

"It may be me next, mister," said he, looking up wearily, with something very like a tear in his eye.

I asked where the rest of the world could be found, as no one else was in sight.

"The gals is figgering themselves in their best black, I reckon," replied Mr. Blount; "and all the boarders is gone to church."

Glancing at the Bible, I observed that it was open at Revelations.

"Why Revelations?" I asked, perhaps more inquisitive than was decorous.

"I guess it don't sinnify where we read. It's the one Book as is good from beginning to end," said he.

Leaving Mr. Blount, I then went out in

the direction of the drug-store, hearing the first note of the bell as it began to toll. The city was alive with men, women, and children. They straggled over the green-sward in scores, thickening towards the church in the west. Already two or three of the stores had their shutters up.

Fortunately, I was in time for the doctor. He had a patient in the person of a well-stained working-man, who had come in from the country for something "to fight the chills." The man had a presentiment of sickness, and the doctor, good soul, did not lecture him on the folly of such fancies, but put before him a row of bottles, in inscribed paper, and bade him select any two.

"They're a dollar each, pick where you like. They'll do your business for you, and cheaply, too."

Accordingly, without a murmur, though a little shamefaced and hurriedly, the man put one bottle in his right-hand pocket and the other in the pocket to the left; and, jangling the dollars on the counter, he marched out, and into the forest again.

I hoped my case would not require such costly treatment. I was in want of stimulants—not such stuff as the saloon supplied, but veritable liquor to encourage the blood and brace the nerves. The doctor listened, stroked his beard, looked profoundly serious, and thought a while in silence. Then he said a dollar tonic was the very thing for me. From what he could make of my case, I might hope for the best after the tonic.

I hastily replied that I hoped for the best already, and that I merely wanted a draught of something on the spot.

"That will not do," said the doctor with infinite despondency of tone. "It is no small matter to alight an attack of fever. You are weakened, anyone may see, and quite unfit to resist the next disease or ailment which may come upon you. Now, this," laying his left forefinger fondly on a carefully-wrapped bottle, "is just the sort of stuff to make you, as it were, impregnable."

This was high and seductive praise for the tonic, but I was none the more inclined to be subservient to the craft of the drug-master.

"In plain words, I want a clean drink," said I. "The tonic I will have later on, if I want it."

Not until now did the doctor inform me that he had no qualification entitling him to sell alcoholic liquor, or such beverages

as I asked for. True, he had many delicious and stimulating fluids in the brightly-coloured bottles on his shelves, but he did not retail them. They were used by him for the compounding of his medicines. It was a pity, but he was prohibited—strictly. -

Greatly depressed in spirits, I moved towards the open door, determined to go directly to the church, and make one in the funeral procession.

But no. Though the doctor could do nothing for me, he would like me to stay with him for a moment or two. Why should he not prescribe for me? Or, better still, maybe I had a prescription in my pocket-book. If so, the thing was done, for, of course, I could not be supposed able to read the mysterious writing of the profession.

Unfortunately, however, I had no such reminiscence of past sickness about me; nor would I be prescribed for. But my own eyes just then caught the name on a bottle of dark liquid before me, "cherry brandy," and all my yearning returned.

Again I desperately implored him to sell me a pint, or as small a quantity as he would, of the inspiring liquor; and in my desperation I forgot myself, and my duty personal and relative, for I hurried to the door, looked this way and that, and, returning, informed the doctor that no one was near to see what he might do. Happily, he was a man well worn in life, and versed in the infirmities of our nature, for he only smiled and said, "No, that won't do," in a melancholy tone.

Once more I was prompted to evil. It came upon me suddenly, with the tolling of the bell, strange to say. What if I wrote a prescription?

Would the doctor regard it; or would he take and tear it into a score of pieces, righteously indignant?

I put it to him, bit by bit—and then bodily—with bated breath.

Silence again for thirty seconds. Then, still without speaking, the doctor passed me a prescription form, and told me to sign my name opposite the M.D. at the bottom.

"I am bound to tell you, doctor, that I have no medical degree," I was beginning to say, but the doctor only waved his hand impatiently, muttering a mild "Hush!"

I no longer hesitated, but, with a dash, wrote out the following prescription: "Two ounces cherry brandy, two ounces water," and signed it. Then, with a grave



face, as though the doctor and I were in consultation over some distinguished patient with a complication of maladies, I returned the paper to him.

The cautious man looked long at it, and thoughtfully, as though it were elaborate, involving much and careful labour, and it seemed to me that I heard the deliberate church-bell toll a dozen times before he made any movement in assent to my mute proposition or repudiation of it.

At the end of some time, without a word, the doctor put forth his hand, and measured into a glass the two ounces of cherry brandy which were the main item on my paper, and then carefully measured the same quantity of water into another glass; setting both glasses before me with a laconic request for twenty-five cents.

I swallowed the brandy at a gulp, took not the least notice of the water—Florida water is something of a medicine at all times—gave my doctor a quarter-dollar, and, with courteous good-morning, left him to his thoughts. Half an hour afterwards I saw him in the church with the rest of Bartow, but his face told little of his feelings. It is quite possible the kind-hearted man did not consider the prescription worth registration.

Much fortified and enlivened by the tonic of my own prescribing, I now walked towards the church. It was as blithesome a morning as can be imagined. The sky was blue and cloudless, but the heat was most judiciously tempered by a breeze which had come a hundred and fifty miles from the Atlantic, through pine-forests, gathering sweet and exhilarating perfume by the way. The fresh green tops of the pines in the west were swaying lazily. A party of rather lean kine, with bells round their necks, strolled quietly through the city, with their heads up, as though they wondered what the green and white buildings here and there might signify. The air was pervaded by the sound of millions of grass-hoppers chirruping their contentment with life. Higher up, in the boughs of a wild lemon-tree, dying of civilisation, a brace of mocking-birds were interchanging shrill discourtesies, and manœuvring gymnastically from twig to twig in their efforts to peck the life out of each other. Higher still, seemingly bathed in the blue of the heavens, a party of buzzards appeared to be prospecting the city of Bartow from a safe distance—as if anyone would ill-treat a buzzard—until, suddenly, with alighting swoop, one of them deserted the empyrean,

and settled—a hunched ungainly heap—on the head of a cypress.

But by this, I was in the midst of live Bartow, stiff in unfamiliar clothes, and almost hysterical with expectation, if eyes and mouths open so strangely as those of the women and children about the church were capable of right interpretation. There must have been a couple of hundred of them standing looking fixedly at one quarter of the forest; the children in a sad state of suffering bewilderment, clutching their mothers, and glancing alternately at their dark garments, the faces of their parents, and the fascinating forest.

As for the men of the community, they stood apart. The citizens and farmers—all whites—were a tall, strong-featured band of men, in black from head to toe, save for a knot of white ribbon worn in the button-hole of the coat like a distinction. They did not gape like the women, but talked soberly and composedly.

A tremor of excitement among the women made me follow the direction of their eyes. A procession was seen in the distance coming through the maze of pine-trunks. The bell began to toll more briskly, and an orderly rush for seats inside was made by certain boys and girls.

I followed the crowd into the church, and succeeded in getting a seat in a pew by the side of an old man, who was solacing himself in that distressing moment with a pinch of snuff, as well as his shaking fingers would permit.

The good people of Bartow, thus clothed in their best, were a curious gathering. The women and elder girls wore dresses and bonnets or hats whose fashion had long died away in other parts of the world. Yet, for all the solemnity of the hour and their general oddity, they could not help very palpably comparing appearances with each other, and doing their utmost to second the effect of their sartorial bravery. It was not one day in a hundred that they had such a chance of parading their "best black."

But the men and boys were still more grotesque in their apparel. Save such as had come originally from large cities, where friction soon rubs off eccentricity, they were all marked characters, as seen with their faces in deep shadow, and their bodies covered with garments that bore "home-made" written in their every crease. Doubtless their black cloth coats concealed arms bunched with muscles, and bodies strong as oak-trees; but they

did it so ungraciously, with such excessive allowance for the still further increase in size of the same arms and bodies, that one might be excused for one moment believing that it was the man who was defective, and not his clothes.

And the smaller the man or boy, the more deformed did he seem. One hapless little boy, for instance, came into church with trousers which must have been someone else's, or made large with a view to his distant manhood; while the coat into which he had evidently been compressed, fitted like a skin on his back, could not meet by inches in front, and stayed, as to its sleeves, a long way from his wrists. This boy was so much more of a figure than common, that other boys in the building found it more amusing to laugh at him than follow the service, heedless that they, each and all, were only slightly less ridiculous than he.

But all thoughts of dress and demeanour seemed for the moment forgotten or absorbed in the bustle at the church porch. A man with a large white ribbon in his buttonhole came inside and made certain arrangements in the east of the church by the rails round the dais, and then withdrew, to bring two other citizens for their opinion on what he had done. This under the eyes of the congregation, the younger part of which was already hectic with excitement, and now and again standing on tiptoe to get a better view of what was going forward.

Then, a gentleman, in a coat betokening his ordination, entered, and, with uplifted hand, asked for perfect silence. I did not think his request would be granted; but for the space of about half a minute you might have heard a pin drop. It was a dreadful lull inside, contrasted with the uncertain, heavy advancing tread of feet outside. Even the sob of distress from the lady in black crape, leaning ponderously on the arm of a younger lady, also in black crape, who followed the bearers up the narrow side-aisle, came as a relief, though when the poor woman's cries became loud enough to echo throughout the building, one longed again for the stillness.

Prominent among those who preceded the coffin was a very tall old man, with a small bald head. He was in orders, and evidently a friend of the dead man. Now and again he would cover his face with his hands, or look about him with a sorrowing expression. This clergyman had undertaken the funeral sermon and service.

When the coffin was deposited where it could be seen by most of the congregation, and the sobbing of the widow had somewhat abated, the service began. As for the significance which this old clergyman put into his words, it was marvellous. Not an accent of his voice but told how he deplored the loss yonder poor woman, himself, and the community had suffered; and he did not need the extra impulse he seemed to receive whenever his eyes—they were mild, dark eyes—rested on the velvet-palled, wreath-becrowned coffin a few feet from him. Thrice he broke down in his sermon, and cried aloud, with his big gaunt hands before his face, like a boy. But for each of these lapses of self-control he tried, as it were, to atone by new and increased vigour of speech. Indeed, at length, when he had sent electric bolt after electric bolt among us, and had made the little building reverberate chaotically, he himself began to feel the fatigue of such exertion, and brought the sermon to a close.

He sat down; then, as if he had neglected something, he rose again, and in clear, tranquillising tones said that a wish having been expressed that the coffin should be opened for friends to see the deceased once more, this would be done during the singing of a hymn. And immediately, as if he had not spent his strength freely enough already, the old man led off the hymn with a full voice for the encouragement of others.

The hymn ended, and the carpenter having gone back to his seat, there was a general shuffling from the pews of old men and women, young men and women, boys and girls, who formed a regular line, and proceeded in order towards the coffin. Poor Major P—— lay at rest, heedless of the scene. But not so his widow, who, almost alone in the church, kept her seat, while these others, compared to her, mere strangers to him, looked at him again. No wonder she lost self-control afresh.

And so one by one the congregation paused alongside the coffin, satisfied their affection or curiosity, and returned to their pews, either calm and saddened, pale and convulsed, or smiling with a sense of triumph at having borne the sight so well.

From my pew I observed the four girls from Blount House, each with a handkerchief to her eyes, awaiting their turn, and subsequently reseated themselves with pale faces, yet very carefully, so that no part of their best black might be jeopardised. I

am a little mistaken if the young things did not peep a good deal from behind their handkerchiefs to see what the rest of Bartow thought of them.

Another hymn was sung during the final closing of the coffin, and then the old minister gave us a benediction which, for eloquence and fervour, I have never heard equalled. After this there was a general trooping forth and gathering on the sward outside, where a dozen buggies and carts full of mourners were already waiting. A procession was rapidly formed, the coffin put on one of the light carts used for the conveying of produce to market, followed immediately by a buggy containing the two ladies in crape, and all proceeded slowly by the thick sandy track towards the cemetery.

The cemetery was a piece of virgin land enclosed from the forest, with all its trees thickly upon it. The number of graves could have been counted in a minute or two. They were mostly at the foot of a tree, as though the trunk of the pine, aspiring upwards, were designed for a head-stone. And all about between the trees, and over the mounds, wild vines and morning-glories flung their trellis-work, knitting them lightly together. A rude fencing of stakes driven in X-wise served to keep roaming bears, deer, panthers, or wild hogs out of the consecrated plot; but there was nothing to prevent wild turkey roosting in the trees, or the green, blue, scarlet, and yellow birds of the semi-tropical South from flashing their rainbow-colours over the still heaps of sand. Here poor Major P—— was laid in his bed, amid the hearty sobbing of a hundred friends.

An hour later the four girls of Blount House were gliding merrily on their roller-skates up and down the pine-boarded corridor of their father's house, and old Blount himself, having put the Bible high out of reach on a top shelf, was earnest in exposition of the peccadilloes of certain fellow-citizens.

That evening, after supper, I was strolling in the western woods, when I came upon two Bartow boys, standing in the scrub, discussing the funeral of the morning. The elder of the boys was, to the eye, about eleven years old, the other four or five years younger. The former was smoking a long, fat, richly-scented cigar with much appreciation.

"Wasn't he white?" said the younger one, awestruck by his memory.

"Yes, of course," was the other's reply ;

"they all are. But say, I wouldn't like it if I was him. I'd like to jump up and frighten 'em all—wouldn't I?" This was followed by clouds of cigar-smoke.

"Why did you go up and look at him if you wouldn't like it in his place?" I asked, stepping forward towards the cigar-smoker.

The boy stared with delicious effrontery, then took his cigar from his mouth, smiled knowingly, and guessed it was different.

"Why did you go up?" I persisted.

"Oh, I dunno, sir," said he. Then, turning to the other little boy, he put the question to him on my behalf, with a wink on his own: "Why did you, Neddy?"

Neddy was rather frightened under the questioning, nor at all reassured by the wink. But he managed to say that he had only done what the others did, "and I wish I hadn't—I do," he said. "He was so frightful white!"

After this, it was easy to get the cigar-smoker to confess that he was no better than Neddy. He had seen Major P. when alive, and spoken to him, but he had not known him "to love him, you know"; he hadn't been one with tears in his eyes—not he; it would take a deal to knock him over, he reckoned.

The occasion was one to be improved, if I had been up to the effort, and fit to play mentor. As it was, I merely told him that he was a pretty fellow to be smoking cigars, and that I hoped the taste would knock him over, if nothing else could.

"How old do you imagine I am, sir?" asked the boy, with an assumption of dignity.

"Something under ten," I replied, setting him aflame with indignation.

"I'm fourteen and four months," said he, then laughed hysterically to himself as he repeated the word "ten." However, it was something in his favour that he could first let his cigar out and then drop it.

"And why does your father let you smoke such weeds?" I continued.

"Weeds, sir!" cried he, rising some inches. "I don't smoke any but ten-cent cigars, and they're father's own, which he smokes. Try one, sir."

And to my wonder he pressed the thing upon me, and would have lit it from his own fusee-box.

After this, we could not but be friends. I asked him his name, and learnt that he was the eldest son of Mr. William Smith, who kept store in a side-street. And he, on his side, enquired my name and usual place of residence, whistling with admira-

tion when I told him I was English and had lately crossed the Atlantic.

"Those two little islands in the map, Neddy, you know—they're England," he explained to Neddy.

Finally, he whispered that his father was going to have a dance next evening, and that he was just then stepping up to ask Betty Foster to come to it—would I go with him? It wasn't far, and Betty would be sure to give me some oranges.

Of course I was willing to see Betty, and told him so, making him—the rude, outspoken, cigar-smoking backwoods boy—blush to his ears, and peer at me dubiously. But he seemed, on consideration, to reject me as a rival; for he immediately rejoined that I might easily see her if I would come, and Neddy should run on to tell her to wash her face (oh, Betty!), or would I come to the hop to-morrow—he could and would invite me on the spot! Then I might dance with Betty. He laughed mischievously, and put his hand to his mouth, as he said this about dancing.

"Perhaps she can't dance—is that it?" I asked.

"She! She not dance! You bet. It's you," he added, more mildly. "She's so precious little, and you—you're so tall—like a pine, ain't he, Neddy?"

As for Neddy, poor lad, he was completely extinguished by all this high talk. Master Smith's impudence terrified him.

But the boy's impudence had nothing malicious about it: his wits wanted "fixing" aright—that was all. Had there been a grammar-school in Bartow, with a tough birch to it, he would have been birched into politeness, and metamorphosed advantageously in some five or six months. This was shown, I thought, by his renewed invitation to the dance, pressed almost affectionately with a "Do come, sir!"

I thanked him, and said with his leave—which he granted proudly—I would make a memorandum of the engagement; if Betty was to be there to-morrow, I would postpone seeing her until then.

"And what is Betty Foster to you, Tom?" I asked most unchivalrously.

It was a sight thereupon to see Master Smith swell like a turkey, and try to stand on his toes, as he answered unhesitatingly, in a touch-me-who-dare tone of universal challenge:

"She's my girl, sir!"

I could not help laughing at him again, in spite of the disquietude it caused him;

but, as I told him, considering his relationship with Betty, it was a little hard on her that he had been content to waste time with Neddy and cigars first of all, and then linger talking with me, instead of flying to her. And then I left him, with a perplexed look on his face, and actually blushing for the second time within fifteen minutes.

As for Betty—alas! I had to leave Bartow next day, and so missed my chance of meeting her at the "hop."

#### CAN I FORGIVE?

CAN I forgive? Nay, sure I do not know.

Dear love, give me your hand, sit by the fire.

What have they done to us? how fell the blow?

Nay, dear one, do not speak. See, leaping higher,  
The tinted flames spring up to show your face;  
I watch you seated in the well-known place.

A little anguish, trouble, fame aspersed;

The outer world looked coldly for a while;

The storm-cloud lowered, yet it did not burst,

It only hid the summer's glorious smile.

It only threatened, shed one tiny tear;

It did not touch your faith in me, my dear!

Maybe, dear heart, sweetheart, the fervent trust

We had in humankind is not so strong;

Yet did we not expect too much? Unjust

'Twould be to blame the maker of the song,

If some voice unattuned took up the lay,

And with harsh notes swept all the air away.

What have they done then, sweet? The dear old home,

All girt with green, and cradled in the hills,

Is ours no more; no longer may we roam

When eventide with all its grandeur fills

The hollows in the distance—may no more

Wander at night along the river shore!

Yet close your tender eyes, lean your dear head

Upon my shoulder. All comes back in haste.

I scent your flowers—see the glowing red

That round your window autumn's hand hath traced;

I see the river run its course of gold,

The hills arise to greet us as of old.

They cannot take those pictures from us e'er;

They may not enter here our hearth beside;

They cannot spoil Dame Nature calm and fair;

They may not mar our love, or break our pride.

Ah, dearest, love me still, and while we live

We have no foe—there's nothing to forgive.

#### WHICH OF THEM ?

A STORY IN TEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER VII.

THE next morning the first visitor to the darkened house was Brixton. Bob, the page, opened the door to him.

"All over, then?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," stolidly answered the boy.

"Can I see Mrs. White?"

Mrs. White soon appeared, attired, as to her body, in extemporised mourning, attired, as to her mind, in that blended sadness and congratulation which is considered most congenial to the feelings of an heir enriched by death. She had all along been one of Brixton's warmest

supporters, and words which Mr. Marston had dropped in his last half-delirious weakness had satisfied her that Brixton was the chosen heir, even if—as she said—she could not believe her own eyes and ears that she had seen and heard him married to Lucy the night before.

"So it is over, Mrs. White?"

"Yes, sir. Your poor uncle never rallied after you left; in fact, he was really dead when you saw him last."

"When I saw him last?"

"Yes, sir; you may remember I gave it as my opinion at the time. You thought it was a faint, no doubt, but he never breathed again. It was a blessed thing as he had his wish first, and saw all settled between you and Miss Lucy."

"Can I see her?"

"Who has a better right, sir? I'll send her word you're here; but I don't know if she's up yet, for indeed she is worn out, poor lady, with all that she has gone through."

A message was dispatched to Mrs. Marston, but Mrs. White looked more disappointed than Brixton did when the reply came back than Mrs. Marston was very tired and unwell, and might not leave her room that day.

"Never mind, sir, it's nothing serious, I assure you; she'll be quite well to-morrow when she has got over the fatigue; you've no occasion to be anxious. But it was a sad wedding, wasn't it, sir? And a strange one; but it had your poor dear uncle's dying blessing on it, and no doubt you'll be blessed."

"I hope so, I'm sure," responded Brixton solemnly, but much puzzled.

"Of course, it's too soon to talk about arrangements," continued Mrs. White, "and would not be becoming. But if there were anything that you would wish done at once in the house, or about the attendance on Mrs. Marston, you may depend on my carrying out your wishes, sir, as it were on my own authority."

"Oh, thank you; nothing occurs to me at present. You know best about things as they are."

"I ought to know the ways of this house, surely, sir, having lived here in one or other capacity for five-and-twenty years before Miss Lucy—I beg your pardon, sir, Mrs. Marston—was born, or came here. Mrs. Marston, to be sure, may wish to do her own housekeeping; but a young lady like her will find it a great tie, and, at any rate, I hope, sir, that an old friend—if I

may use the expression—will have the preference over a stranger."

"These are matters that require consideration, Mrs. White," replied Brixton with dignity; "all that I can say for the present is that I fully appreciate your faithful service to my uncle, and for my part could wish for nothing better than its continuance to myself. In the meantime, I am still, of course, somewhat uncertain of my own position, and my mind is chiefly occupied with grief for him."

Brixton could not produce tears to order, but he could look as solemn as an undertaker's horse, and feel as keenly; and Mrs. White's soft heart was reminded of its duty. Genuine tears, though not from a very deep fountain, bedewed her black-bordered handkerchief, and due tribute of eulogistic words was paid to the memory of the departed. Finally, Brixton left word for Lucy that he would call again to-morrow morning; when he hoped to find her better.

He barely escaped being run over by Kensington's cab, which drew up at the door at an hour when its inmate was seldom seen abroad, unless there was "something up." Out he jumped now with an air of subdued eagerness which there was no one to appreciate, rang the bell softly but imperatively, and asked without hesitation for Mrs. Marston. He received the same answer as Brixton had done, but was much more discontented with it, and sent back to ask if Mrs. Marston would be able to see him in the evening. Mrs. Marston feared that she would not be well enough, and he had to content himself with promising to call again in the morning.

Unwelcome message after message thus broke in on the solitude of Lucy's darkened room; but as the hours wore past, none brought the announcement for which her ears were ready and her heart longing. She had made sure that Yorkshire would have been with her as soon almost as the morning; her headache and weariness would quickly have been forgotten in his arms; her few natural tears would have been wept out on his breast, and then they would have been free to be happy. She smiled when Brixton came, thinking how formidable he had been yesterday, how harmless he was to-day; she frowned at Kensington's persistency, and wondered that Yorkshire had let himself be outstripped. But wonder turned into dismay, and dismay into vague apprehension, and

that again took shape in a thousand torturing fancies, as the slow day wheeled round her, lying alone, without companions except servants, without occupation except maddening thought. Why did he not come? Why did he not send? Why did he not write? Could he be ill? Then he must be unconscious, or he would have sent her word. He must have met with an accident, and be lying senseless in some hospital. Or perhaps, worse than all, he had been disgusted at her unmaidenly conduct in summoning him last night; and though he had kept his word loyally, he was cold towards her, and did not care to meet her again.

"Men never love women who are easily won," she thought. "I have thrown myself at him—I actually asked him to marry me; and now, of course, he does not love me any more. And oh, how shall I look at him when he does come?"

Thus she tormented herself all day, but her pride would not allow her to drop a word which could let Mrs. White know that her persistent headache was due to fretting for Yorkshire; the good lady herself was satisfied that she had been married to Brixton; and though the house was by this time buzzing with assertions, contradictions, and disputes as to the identity of the bridegroom, the maid who waited on Lucy did not venture to say an unnecessary word to aggravate the pain of her throbbing head, or bring on one of the fits of hysterical sobbing into which she from time to time broke down at the end of that terrible day.

In the evening came a note from Mr. Picton, expressing sympathy, deeply regretting that he had been absent in the country when summoned the previous evening, and announcing his intention of opening Mr. Marston's will the following morning at eleven o'clock, and reading it in the presence of his nephews and herself, if she chose to be present. By this time Lucy was so worn out that she was ready to accept any consolation. Mr. Picton's taking it for granted that all three Alans would assemble next morning, seemed to her an assurance that they would do so; she slipped from under the burden of misery that she was too weak to carry any longer, drank some tea, and slept the long, heavy sleep of exhaustion. Next morning she awoke full of hope, and satisfied that she should see her husband, and all would be well.

At ten minutes to eleven, Brixton

walked up the steps, and rang the bell. He was the first arrival, and he surveyed everything around him with a curious air of uncertain proprietorship. He practised glancing with the eye of a master, and wished it were possible to know how he was doing it. There was a mirror, however, over the dining-room mantelpiece; so he glanced at that with the eye of a master; but he was not quite sure that he should have recognised the expression, if he had not known. He might easily have mistaken it for a furtive look of extreme nervousness. So, indeed, might anyone else; for he was alternately pink and yellow as to the complexion, while his fingers were as difficult to keep quiet as Michael Scott's familiar spirit.

Kensington followed him in five minutes; he had no occasion to practise the glance of a master, for he always looked as if everything belonged to him; and Brixton suddenly felt his satisfied sense of heirship begin to wither and contract within his swelling bosom, while perplexities and confusion began to fill the vacant space. But a keener observer would have seen that Kensington, too, was uneasy; there was a sullen flush on his brow, and his heavy moustache was not left for a moment in peace. He was pretty well used to playing for high stakes, but never for any quite so high as these.

"How do, old fellow?" he exclaimed cheerily. "This is the last scene of the play, I suppose. We shall soon know our fate."

"Yes," said Brixton. He could not think of anything else to say.

"Well, good luck to the winner, and good temper to the loser, say I; and which ever way it goes, may we shake hands in half an hour as good friends as now!"

"We ought to have something to drink that in," said Brixton, with a feeble attempt at good-fellowship; "it's too good a toast to waste on air."

Somehow, he had not the courage to ring the bell, but Kensington instantly did so, and both the young men were glad to swallow a glass of wine before Mr. Picton entered, carrying a long blue envelope, and invested with the dignity of the messenger of fate.

"Good-morning, gentlemen," said Mr. Picton. "Mr. Marston from Yorkshire is not here, I see."

"No," answered Kensington; "he has not received your note; it is lying waiting for him at my chambers. He went out

on Tuesday evening, and I have heard nothing of him since."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Picton; "I hope there is no reason to be anxious about him."

"I did not think so until to-day," answered Kensington quite frankly. "He has been staying with me for some time, but we never kept any regular hours; he went and came as he pleased, and sometimes slept out without giving me notice. But in my uncle's state of health it does not seem likely that he would be absent from town so long without explanation. Still, it is not two whole days since he left, so it is rather too soon to raise the hue-and-cry."

"At any rate, that is not our present business," remarked Mr. Picton. "It appears useless to wait for him, and I will, therefore, proceed to the reading of the will."

The Alans listened eagerly while the tortuous sentences were unreeled to them, but neither grasped their full purport as they were read.

"So, you see," the lawyer summed up, "the whole property and business are left to a nephew only distinguished as the husband of Miss Lucy Scott, and the first thing that I have to do is to enquire if such a marriage has taken place, and if so, who is the happy man!"

"I am the happy man," exclaimed Brixton promptly. "I was selected by my uncle to be her husband. I have his note. I knew nothing about the inheritance. I never asked; but he entrusted her to me."

"Your assertion, sir, is absurdly unfounded," said Kensington in his haughtiest tones. "I have the happiness to be the young lady's husband; I was married to her on Tuesday evening, by special licence, by my poor uncle's death-bed. He gave away the bride, and the Rev. James Wilson performed the ceremony. Here is the certificate."

And he handed a paper to Mr. Picton.

"Impossible," cried Brixton, white with rage. "I am the man. It is a lie—a forgery. Ask Mrs. White—she was at the marriage."

"Ask whom you please," returned Kensington; "here is my certificate. And let me tell you, that if you give me the lie a second time in the house where my wife is living, and my uncle lying dead, I will thrash you within an inch of your life the moment I get you outside it."

"No quarrelling, gentlemen, if you please," put in Mr. Picton; "this is far too serious a matter. Am I really to understand that you both claim to be married to the lady?"

"I can only answer for myself," said Kensington.

"And I for myself," said Brixton. "Call in Mrs. White."

"Remember," continued the lawyer, "that one of you is certainly exposing himself to a charge of felony, if he persists in a claim which must be without foundation, and which can be easily disproved. Mrs. White, you say" (to Brixton) "witnessed the marriage?"

"Also the man who was attending on my uncle," added Kensington.

"There is also the clergyman," Mr. Picton went on, "and, above all, the bride herself. It is impossible that the real bridegroom can have any difficulty in establishing his identity, and then nothing but the shame of a useless fraud will fall upon the pretender. Let me withdraw these harsh words; let us say that a practical joke has been attempted—in bad taste, no doubt, but still not carried too far—and let the matter never be heard of beyond this room."

He looked from one to the other; Kensington looked back at him quietly, and waited for Brixton to speak. Brixton sat, changing colour, but with a dogged set of his thin lips. All that he did was to take a note in his uncle's handwriting out of his pocket, and lay it on the table beside Kensington's certificate. Mr. Picton glanced it over.

"This is evidence of the intention," he said, "but not of the act."

"As to notes," remarked Kensington, "I have my note too, but it is from the lady. I don't mean to produce it, if I can help it."

"As to the act," answered Brixton, disregarding his cousin, "if you don't believe me, call in Mrs. White. She was there."

"I certainly shall not let the dispute go beyond the family, as long as I can help it," Mr. Picton replied. "I see I must refer it to Mrs. Marston herself."

"By all means," said Kensington.

Brixton nodded. He seemed determined to say as little as possible.

The cousins maintained no further pretence of friendship when they were left alone together. Each shielded his countenance behind a newspaper, while he awaited the return of Mr. Picton from

that interview with Lucy which has been already related. It was more than half an hour before he appeared, and then his countenance was even graver than before. He briefly informed them that, owing to the darkness of the room, and the other peculiar circumstances of her marriage, Mrs. Marston was unable to speak positively on the point, and that therefore he should be obliged to institute a regular enquiry into the evidence, if they still maintained their claims. Kensington was still resolute; Brixton was still dogged; and consequently a second appointment was made for the following morning, when Mr. Picton hoped to be the *Œdipus* who should solve the all-important riddle—Which of them?

## CHAPTER VIII.

AND where, meantime, was Yorkshire?

It was quite true, as Kensington said, that he had gone out on Tuesday evening; but it was also true that he had returned soon after eight, and found Kensington enjoying himself by his domestic hearth, offering to the Lares the incense of some excellent tobacco, and to himself the libation of an occasional mouthful of very good claret.

"What news?" asked Kensington lazily. Then he caught sight of something unusual in Yorkshire's face, as he hesitated to answer, and questioned him more sharply: "What's up? Come, out with it; I see you've got news."

"I have just seen my uncle die," said Yorkshire slowly.

Kensington sprang to his feet with one of his favourite expletives, and broke his pet pipe against the mantelpiece.

"Dead! Is he? So soon? By Jove, I never expected it!"

"He has been much worse these two last days."

"Yes; but he was always being worse, and better again. I wish I had gone there to-day, instead of sending."

"He was too ill to see anyone."

"Yes; but it would have looked better, and it might have been of importance, if he put off signing his will to the last. One never knows what whims these old men will take when they're at the last gasp. Do you know if he had done it?"

"Not in the least; nobody has mentioned it."

"I'll bet you a fiver he's left it all to Lucy, and we must look sharp about our

wooling. Fair play, mind you, my boy, and all above-board."

"I would rather it were not all left to Lucy," said Yorkshire thoughtfully.

"What the devil's that to you?" snapped Kensington.

"A good deal, seeing that I was married to her this evening."

"You lie!" shouted the other.

"Be careful, I will not take that word from you again. I don't wonder you are disappointed and angry; I was very much taken by surprise myself. Lucy and I have understood each other for some time, and this evening she wrote to me, by my uncle's desire, to say that we should be married at once. He had arranged everything, and we were married in his room. He was dying at the time—he died immediately after it was over, when he was trying to speak to us."

The young man's voice broke, and he put up his hand to his eyes for a moment. Kensington, mad with rage, made a spring forward, and, with one blow, knocked him down. His head struck the corner of the mantelpiece as he fell, crashing heavily among the chairs and fire-irons, and he lay a motionless heap upon the floor. The noise gave Horton a good excuse for hurrying in; he had not far to come. Kensington poured out the story, mixed with oaths and epithets which would have made it incoherent to anyone less accustomed to bad language as a fringe of conversation. Horton stood contemplating the prostrate body of his master's cousin with the coolest nonchalance, while he listened to the tale which Kensington wound up with—

"And now I suppose I've killed him. Do see, Horton; I hate to touch him. I didn't want to do it, and I didn't do it; it was the mantelpiece."

"No reason why you shouldn't do it," remarked Horton, kneeling down to examine Yorkshire, "especially as it was the mantelpiece. I was looking in at the door and saw it all. You quarrelled; he struck you first—you returned the blow; no, his foot slipped on the tiles when he was hitting at you; down he comes—knocks his head against the mantelpiece—concussion of the brain, inquest, medical evidence, fine young fellow, unfortunate accident, universal sympathy for the survivor. Confound it all! The fool isn't dead!"

"No such luck," said Kensington gloomily.

"Just now you thought it was bad luck



if he was dead. Help me along with him to his bed; we must do the thing properly."

Horton's respectfulness for his master was always of a somewhat intermittent type, and under the stress of the present crisis it altogether disappeared. On the other hand, Kensington felt so utterly foiled by the unexpected turn of events, and so entirely incapable of making any use of the helpless condition of his rival, that he gladly abandoned the helm to his valet, who seemed to have some notion of a course to be steered. Between them, poor Yorkshire was very untenderly conveyed to bed, and flung down upon it with little care as to the possible results of a bump more or less to his brain and his bruises.

"What shall we do now?" asked Kensington.

"You can smoke a pipe, while I go for a doctor. I know the right sort of fellow—one who keeps his eyes in his pockets, and believes his ears. Don't you forget how it happened, if he asks any questions; but I think he knows better."

The doctor soon came, a dilapidated specimen of his kind, chiefly desirous of pocketing a real gold sovereign with the least possible delay. He pronounced that there was concussion of the brain, probably not serious, but might be so; there was no occasion to call in a second opinion, as the treatment in such cases was very simple, and he could call in again in the morning.

"He's much more than half drunk," observed Horton, after he had departed; "and whatever happens to-night, he'll swear to-morrow that he always said it would be so."

"Whatever happens!" Kensington repeated. "What are you up to now, Horton? I won't have any foul play here."

"Who said anything about foul play?" retorted the other. "The game has to be won—that's all; but I must know more of how the land lies. It'll be time enough to do all that doctoring business by-and-by; just turn the key on him now, sir, and you go out and get some supper. I'll go up to Russell Square, and find out as much as I can."

So poor Yorkshire was left, untended and uncared-for, lying unconscious, while his precious pair of hosts went their several ways, and met again, some hours later, to discuss the situation. Horton was in high glee, and extremely respectful again.

"It's the greatest lark, sir," he declared;

"they're all in the most precious muddle that ever was. The old gentleman's dead, sure enough, and nobody knows anything about the will. Consequently, they all swear that everything's left to Miss Scott—Mrs. Marston, that is; for it's quite true she was married this evening."

"Then it's all up," remarked Kensington gloomily.

"Up? Not a bit of it! Here's where the laugh comes in. All the house knows that there was a wedding; but there aren't three of them agreed as to who the bridegroom was."

"Why, it was Yorkshire here!"

"So he told you; but Mrs. White swears it was Brixton, and Jane the housemaid knows that it was you."

"Me!"

"You, sir. She got the bedroom door open, and peeped in, and saw the ceremony, and she is sure that you were the bridegroom. Miss Scott was very anxious that nothing should be known about what was going on, and forbade Mrs. White to tell the servants; but, of course, the women sniffed a wedding in the air. And Thomas, who opened the door to the bridegroom and the clergyman, says it was you. He's a chum of mine, and for a couple of sovereigns he'd swear it."

"Who wants him to? It's nonsense!" said the bewildered Kensington.

"They all came round me," pursued Horton, "like flies round a treacle-pot, for me to settle it. I couldn't make out what they were after at first; but I kept quiet till I saw which way the wind blew, and then I only chaffed them all round, and left them as wise as they were before. But now I see our line, as straight as a railway-cutting."

"It's more than I do, I'm sure," returned his master.

"Why, look here, sir. The chances are that the money is left to the young lady. The lawyer wasn't there this evening, and there was no signing of wills; so Mr. Marston must have made his will before he had settled on her husband. At least, it seems likely, things having been so hurried up at the last. Of course she married the farmer, but everyone was in such a muddle that she can't get many to swear to it. Suppose he never comes near her again, and you appear and claim to be her husband? You are just about the same height and size as he is; there are two will swear to your being the bridegroom, and the others will be puzzled, and afraid

to swear you ain't. You've got the evidence; it's all in his pocket in the other room——"

"And my name is the same as his," broke in Kensington, who had revived into eager excitement as Horton unfolded his plan.

"To be sure, sir; now you see it. It's as neat—as neat—as a chess-board," concluded Horton.

"But Lucy! She'll swear she never married me."

"Twenty to one she didn't know whether she was on her head or her heels, or married to the parish beadle. But if she does, you can put it to her, in private, that he's bolted and deserted her, or has another wife somewhere, or something of the sort. That she'll be disgraced and made a story of if the thing is known, and you step in to save her; and that having your name in the register makes the marriage all right. Women will believe anything about law and business, if you only speak positively, and tell them they can't understand the particulars. Then you mix up the sweet, you know——"

"That's my business," interrupted Kensington. "Don't trouble yourself to give me advice about the lady; tell me what we can do with this lout. He may come round in the middle of it all and spoil our little game."

"Not a bit of it; he won't come round." (There was something in Horton's tone that his master did not like; it implied an "He sha'n't," from which Kensington rather revolted, but he held his tongue.) "And when he's off the hooks, or nearly so, I know what to do with him."

"It's an awful risky game altogether," said Kensington slowly. "And suppose the money isn't left in a lump to Lucy after all, but divided somehow, a nice mess I shall have got into for nothing!"

"That's true," observed Horton; "there's always a chance of that. Best thing is to keep this fellow here, quiet and stupid, until the will has been read. Then, if we don't want him, we can take him to a hospital, and by the time he's well, he won't know how he got hurt. If we do want him—well, we'll use him."

Having arrived at this conclusion, Horton condescended to pay some attention to Yorkshire's condition, and he carried out the doctor's directions as far as was necessary to produce a respectable effect. Alan was still quite unconscious, and continued so until the afternoon of the next day, when a dose of medicine, ad-

ministered by Horton, sent him back into the great blank that lies behind our conscious life. So matters went on, up to the Friday morning when Mr. Picton proposed to meet for the second time the rival cousins, and hold a formal investigation of their claims.

Kensington had taken a great deal of keeping up to the point during the thirty-six hours that intervened between his acceptance of Horton's scheme and his committing himself to it by action. As a matter of taste, he disliked becoming a swindler; as a matter of prudence, he appreciated the risks attendant on it more highly than Horton did. He was fully aware that failure might mean imprisonment, and his imagination furnished him with a lively picture of all the inexpressibly vulgar and unpleasant details of such a sequel.

But there was a companion-picture, on which the same imagination turned an equally strong light. His creditors had given him a breathing-space on the strength of his presumed engagement to his uncle's heiress. Let it but once be known that she was married to someone else, and he was out in the cold, and they would be down on him like harpies. He would have to give up his chambers, to skulk about London for fear of arrest, or drag out a dull life in cheap places on the Continent, on a small allowance from his father—at any rate, to lose his place in the world, and be nobody.

Villainy in the one scale and honesty in the other did not alter the weights much when Kensington held the scales; his conscience was attenuated from want of nutriment, and put little pressure in the balance. The mean, miserable certainty kicked the beam, and he chose to play for the high stakes.

He went to Russell Square on the Thursday morning with this resolution in his pocket, determined to act upon it or not according to the contents of the will. These drove the last lingering hesitation from his mind. In a moment he committed himself to the bolder course, and initiated the complication which so closely enwrapped the great question—Which of them?

## DETECTIVES AND THEIR WORK.

SINCE dynamite outrages, and threats and rumours of dynamite outrages, have become a sort of institution in the land,

our detective force and its organisation have been subjected to a good deal of adverse criticism. That such criticism, even when pitched in a scornful key, has been well meant, that there has been no intention to do injustice to the force, goes without saying. Nevertheless a considerable amount of injustice has been done. Many of those who have "rushed in" as critics, have evidently written without knowledge of their subject, have apparently gone upon the principle of the reviewer who did not read the books he had to notice lest he should be prejudiced. That our detectives have not been particularly successful in apprehending the perpetrators of such dynamite outrages as have become accomplished facts is no doubt true; but they have probably done much more in the way of preventing purposed crimes of this kind than could be safely made known, or than their adverse critics would be prepared to give them credit for. That they should frequently fail to discover the criminals who commit these outrages ought scarcely to be matter for surprise, and is certainly no justification for condemning them as a generally incompetent and ill-constituted body. Dynamiting is so far like ordinary crimes that it is difficult of detection in proportion to its ease of commission, and how easy of commission it may be to any savage depraved enough to be regardless of its consequences to others, a little reflection will make evident. But it is not an ordinary crime, and it is a new one. Assassination of individual rulers, or ministers, we have had from of old, but the modern dynamiter, the wholesale indiscriminate assassin, in comparison with whom the Thug was an embodiment of sweetness and light—this monstrosity, until it sprang into existence, was a creature that the ordinary mind was incapable of even imagining. So abhorrent and anti-human a crime as dynamiting was undreamed of in the philosophy alike of those who organised our detective force, and those who framed the laws by which its powers of action are limited. Any detective force might well be unable to immediately hunt down such abnormal criminals as dynamiters. As a matter of fact, dynamiting is a crime for the suppression and punishment of which informers rather than detectives must be the instruments. To conclude—we won't say to reason—from their having hitherto been unable to stamp out dynamite plots and threats that our detective force is only so in name, and is practically a useless

body—to conclude this is worse than illogical—is nonsensical, that is, unless it is to be taken simply as proof of ignorance.

It is said that our plain-clothes men are more a detected than a detective body; that, whether or not the members of the criminal classes are well known to them, they are well known to the members of the criminal classes. This knowledge upon the part of the latter classes, it is argued, makes our detective organisation a delusion and a snare. That there is "something in" such a line of argument, and that to the uninitiated there may well appear to be "everything" in it, may be freely conceded; but the something is at best not much, and in practice its value to criminals is largely, if not wholly, neutralised by other points bearing upon the general position on this head. No doubt there are times when the fact of our detectives being known is a disadvantage, but there are also times when it is an advantage. Many of those who condemn the detective force as at present constituted, are under the impression that criminals act upon the principle of "hanging together lest they should be hanged separately." But they do not. They go in fear of each other, but there is no honour among them for honour's sake. They "play for safety," each for his own hand, and a favourite method with them of doing so is to "round" upon each other. Rounding is constantly going on among them—rounding that leads to apprehensions and convictions, and that would not take place if the detectives were not known to criminals. Many a shady customer will, for reasons of his or her own, quietly "give the office" to a detective whom he knows, and who he is assured will not "bring him into it," but will stick to the "from information received" line. Hosts of criminals, or associates of criminals, will "round" in this way who would never go to any office to be "took down," and who would be much too "fly" to be "drawn" by anyone who was a stranger to them. Again, if an "habitual," when on criminal purpose bent, perceives that he has been spotted by a detective whom he knows, and who he is aware knows him, he will, in all probability, "drop it," for the time being at any rate. Under such circumstances he does not need to be told that in case any job in his line were to be brought off in the neighbourhood in which he had been seen he would be bound to be "lumbered" on suspicion. Of course, a detective who was unknown to the criminal might

follow him up, and might, or might not, take him "in the act," but in such cases certain prevention is, perhaps, as desirable as possible apprehension. It should be remembered, too, that plain-clothes officers have other duties to perform besides that of watching suspects. They have to make arrests and searches under warrants, and openly seek out witnesses; have to be constantly entering the lion's den—the "hot" quarters of their divisions. In doing this they carry their lives in their hands even as things stand, but their lives would be worth far less purchase if they were not known. The knowledge that they are detectives, and "have the law at their backs," carries moral weight—serves them in much the same stead in the way of protection that his uniform does the ordinary police-constable. The detectives are, of course, not loved by the criminal classes, but, being known, they are in a certain sense respected, and are not regarded as mere prowling spies. They get the benefit of the sentiment that exists—though not, perhaps, in a very exalted degree—even in the minds of the criminal classes—the sentiment that finds expression in the saying that, after all, the detectives are only doing their duty, that their proceedings are all in their day's work, and that they have no special feeling of enmity against those they hunt down. Often enough, a criminal who for the moment has nothing to fear—who, say, has just come out from "doing time," and has not yet committed any fresh offence—will be upon quite good terms with the detectives of his division. Indeed, it not unfrequently happens that a detective "picks up a wrinkle" from some incautious word or over-sharp bit of chaff let fall by an habitual with whom he is so far on friendly relations.

Though the fact of the detective being known thus cuts both ways, he would still be known were his identification wholly a disadvantage. That is a necessary outcome of our existing criminal law. Under that law, the detective must go into the witness-box in open court, so that any who may consider it their interest to be able to recognise him at sight have ample opportunities afforded them for seeing him. Apart from this, from his having to make arrests, or execute search-warrants, he would be known to the criminal classes of his division, and it is among the habitual criminals of his division and their associates that the bulk of the work of a

detective lies. A detective, to be fairly efficient, must be acquainted with the runs and "ropes" of the shady quarters of his district; must know their principal inhabitants, and their lines of business, and, to a certain extent, their habits of life. He must know by sight, and beyond any reasonable possibility of mistaking their identity, the more distinguished and dangerous "corner-men" of the locality. The latter is sometimes a very important branch of knowledge. It may fall out that the "clue" to the detection of a crime lies in the absence from his usual haunt of some corner-man known or judged to be capable of such a crime. It can be taken for granted that he has not "stepped it" save for sufficient reasons, and if no other reason is known, it is always worth while to open up investigations on the supposition that he may have been associated with the particular crime in question. Such kind and degree of knowledge a detective could not obtain without becoming known. A pretence of "alummung" as an amusement could not be carried to a sufficient extent for the purpose in view. The shady classes do not mind a sightseer coming into their midst for the once, and the mere passer-by in their quarters need, as a rule, have nothing to fear, if he only has common-sense enough not to make a parade of any snatchable property. But of any "foreigners" found in their quarter more than once, and having no known business there, they would at once be suspicious. The relieving officer, the parish doctor, the School Board officer, the vaccination officer, the accredited agents of religious missions, the sanitary inspector, all these official foreigners are in shady quarters known to the "natives," and are protected by their offices.

As matters stand at present, the detectives of a district are equally well known, and are also protected by their office—otherwise we should much more frequently hear of detectives being crippled, or "corpsed." That they should move openly in criminal haunts is probably the lesser of a choice of evils. To get through the details of his work a plain-clothes officer must show up pretty freely, and however much he might try to keep himself unknown, he would almost inevitably be found out. A "foreigner" other than such officials as those named above found "mouthing about" in neighbourhoods in which the criminal and no-visible-means-of-support classes congregate would be set down as a

detective, even if he were not one, and a detective who was spotted while trying to keep himself dark, would run much greater risks of rough usage than one whose calling was practically avowed.

The extreme critics of the detective force, not only complain that the members of that force are known to the criminal classes, but add that anyone may recognise them at a glance by their policeman's walk. This latter statement, however, we venture to assert would, if put to the test, be found to be a mistaken one. Detectives are not branded by any distinctive walk or bearing. When off duty, or walking simply to get over the ground, the detective walks just as other men. When on the watch with a definite object in view, he necessarily accommodates his pace to that of the person he is watching. If generally on the look-out for anything that may turn up, he may walk slowly or loungingly, but even then his walk is no more a policeman's march than it is the walk of—say—any working-man who may be out shop-window gazing, or for a leisurely evening stroll. If a plain-clothes man is brought from one division to another on some special business, or when a new man is first put on in a division, it generally proves a surprise, a case of "Who'd have thought it!" even to the habitués. They only come to know the strange or new men for what they are, when some official act proclaims their office. And if it is thus with the professionals, those who see most of detectives, and who often have reason to fear each bush an officer—if it is thus with them, it may be taken as certain that amateur criminals or honest outsiders cannot recognise detectives offhand.

It is said again that the detectives, being recruited from the ranks of the ordinary police force, cannot be expected to be men of such a degree of intelligence as ought to be characteristic of detectives. On this head it does not seem to be taken into account that the detective, unlike the poet, is not born. He is made, and all things considered, it is questionable whether there is any better method of making him than by previous training as a constable. It is necessary that he should be a man of good physique, and it is exceedingly doubtful whether any man, combining the physique of a policeman with the super-subtle intellect which some people regard as the essential attribute of a detective, would care to become a plain-clothes officer, even

if the position were offered to him, without his being asked to undergo any previous training. The man endowed with such a combination of physical and mental qualities would be able to command success in more pleasant and profitable callings than that of a detective. That the average "uniform" constable is to be esteemed rather for his bodily than his mental powers is no doubt true, but there are in the police force many men above the average, and it is from among these that promotion to detective rank is made. Those who do become detectives in this way, may not stand out as world's wonders in inductive reasoning, analysis of character, or divination of motive. Still, they are men of nerve, resourceful, self-reliant, courageous, and have special knowledge of the ways of criminals, and special experience in dealing with them.

In judging detectives and their work, many people are apt to take the detectives of the stage and of fiction as their standards of comparison, and compared with Vidocq, Hawkhaw, Mr. Bucket, or the still more marvellous detectives of Poe's stories, the plain-clothes men of real life are unquestionably an inferior race. It should be borne in mind, though, that the playwright or novelist is very much master of the situation, seeing that he creates it. He can control circumstances, and make everything fit in, but the detective of everyday life is controlled by circumstances, and about the worse fault he can have is to try to make things fit in to his foregone conclusion of the explanation of any more or less mysterious crime. While, however, the ordinary detective compares unfavourably with the more famous of his brethren of fiction, he contrasts very favourably indeed with the "duffing" creature whom latter-day critics of the force appear to have evolved from an inner consciousness.

Whether or not a secret police—a police that would not have to present themselves at police-stations, or give evidence, or make arrests, and that would be known only by and accountable to the chiefs of their department—whether such a police as this would be tolerated by public opinion in England, and whether, if it were, it would be more successful than Continental secret police have been in suppressing dynamiting and bringing dynamiters to book, are points that need not be discussed here.

Meanwhile, however, it is a mistake in policy as well as upon the facts of the case

to hold up to general condemnation our existing detective force, simply because it has not as yet been entirely successful in dealing with such a crime as dynamiting.

## LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNN," ETC., ETC.

### CHAPTER XLV.

EDIE'S expectations of "coming upon Phil somewhere or other" were not disappointed, although the results of such chance encounters were scarcely what she had expected. On her first arrival in town she had not felt equal to mounting Coquette—who, however, had been sent up after her mistress from Stanham—so Mr. Fairfax had hired the best carriage and horses the Alexandra stables had at command, the coachman had turned his horses' heads in the direction of Hyde Park, and just as Edie and her father drove in through the gates, Ellinor, Lucy, and Phil came riding out.

Ellinor, it was evident, did not so much as see the occupants of the carriage, whose coachman so obligingly slackened pace to allow the equestrians to pass. It was possibly a pardonable shortsightedness, for Phil rode between her and the Squire's victoria. Rode, indeed, so closely to the wheel that Edie could have touched his horse's head as he passed. And he saw her no more than did Ellinor.

For a very good reason, too. His eyes were fastened so intently on Miss Yorke's face that all creation beside must have been a blank to him. Edie noted his look, and compared it mentally with one she had once before seen on his face on a certain occasion when Ellinor had chosen to break up a whist-party with a song. To her fancy it seemed compounded three parts of admiration—not a jot less—one part of an eager, questioning doubt.

"Edie, look at those greys—what superb action!" said the Squire from the other side at that moment.

He, good man, in the Park never saw aught but the horses. All the crowned heads of Europe might have ridden past him, he would have seen naught but the heads, legs, manes, and tails of the animals they rode.

"Can't see anything, papa," replied Edie promptly; "I've something in my eye."

It was perfectly true. She had some-

thing in her eye—in both eyes, that is—hot, scalding tears of wounded pride.

Some weeks passed after this before Edie and Phil chanced upon each other again. Weeks during which Colonel Wickham made a variety of futile efforts to throw the young people into each other's way. He made little dinners, and he made evenings at the play, at every one of which Phil failed to make his appearance, pleading always as his excuse a previous engagement with Miss Yorke.

The Colonel, on the few occasions on which he chanced to find Phil at home at his rooms, made one or two efforts at cross-questioning. But Phil refused to be cross-questioned.

"Why go over old ground?" he would say, with an ugly frown on his heretofore good-tempered brow. "One or other of us would be sure to lose his temper."

And he would immediately take up his hat, plead an engagement, and leave his uncle in sole possession of his quarters.

So the Colonel gave it up for the nonce, feeling that after all there was nothing for it but to wait.

Meantime, Edie and her father were having but a sorry time of it together. Edie was captious, whimsical, and irritable to the last degree.

"The weather is—well, let's say changeable, just now," the Squire would say pathetically to one or other of his old friends whom he was meeting every day at his club; "and talk about 'the three old maids of Lee, who were cross as cross could be, I've a young maid at home who could beat them hollow at that game.' But he never failed to wind up with a pitying "Poor little thing! it's her illness that has tried her nerves; by-and-by she'll be her old bright self again."

However, as time went on, Edie showed more signs of developing a new self than of recovering her old one. Her desires every day seemed to take a new turn. One day it was: "Papa, I want you to teach me whist, so that I may play with you and Colonel Wickham on wet days."

"Good Heavens, my dear, you don't mean to suggest a dumby!" ejaculated the Squire.

"Well, why not a dumby, or two dumbies, for the matter of that! I'm sure I could take all the tricks if you'd only tell me how."

"No doubt, my dear—no doubt," acquiesced the Squire; "you'd trump all your partner's best cards and then lead out your aces and kings."

"Well, why not? So long as I took the tricks, what could it matter?"

Then the Squire, who had by this time learnt the futility of contradicting Edie in any one of her whims, would content himself with a silent shrug of his shoulders, and would get out of ear-shot as quickly as possible.

She nearly took her father's breath away on one occasion by informing him, in a terribly resolute tone, that she wanted him to put an advertisement in the Times for a companion for her. "For I'm sick and tired of old Janet, papa," she went on; "she agrees with every word I say, and pulls a long face over me every time she comes into the room. Why, only yesterday, she told me 'I might as well be a lily for all the colour I had,' and actually, this morning, she comes to me and tells me I've grown so thin she must 'take all my dresses in.' The ridiculousness of the thing, when I'm getting fatter and fatter every day! Don't you see I am, papa? Just look how fat my cheeks are, and rosy, too, just like a farmer's daughter's."

"Of course—of course, Edie; anyone with eyes in his head could see that," agreed the Squire, looking a little sadly at his daughter's pale face and hollow cheeks; "never looked better in your life! What could Janet be thinking about?"

"That's just what I asked her, papa, and I told her at once to let every one of my dresses out under the arms this afternoon; they were so tight I could scarcely breathe in them."

"My dear, won't that rather spoil the look of them?"

"Oh, what do I care so long as I am not squeezed in! And now you see how stupid the old thing is, I want you to advertise for a companion for me—someone, of course, above Janet in station, a nice, quick-tempered person——"

"Quick tempered, Edie?"

"Papa, I know what I'm saying! A nice, quick-tempered person, with plenty of ideas in her head, and a grand capacity for argument——"

"Edie, Edie, the house wouldn't hold you two for a week!"

"Wouldn't hold us for a week!" repeated Edie in mild astonishment. "Why, anyone to hear you talk, papa, would think I had a right-down bad temper."

"No, no, no, my dear; nothing was farther from my thoughts than that. I

made a mistake. What I meant to say was, that the house wouldn't hold me for a week under the circumstances."

And with that the Squire once more beat a hurried retreat.

But Edie's latest proposal, made one morning over the breakfast-table, being a little more within the bounds of reason, he was only too delighted to gratify. It was that Coquette should be saddled at once—that very minute, and that she and he should both go for a canter somewhere or other. Richmond Park, perhaps, or Roehampton—or anywhere else as far from the smoky houses as they could get.

"Delighted, I'm sure, my dear," said the Squire, jumping to his feet with alacrity. "I'll give the order at once, and while Coquette is being brought round, I'll just jump into a hansom and run over to Wickham's, and ask him to bid for me at Tattersall's to-day. There's a sale on, and there's a two-year-old going that I've rather set my mind on."

The Squire arrived at Colonel Wickham's hotel to find Phil all alone in the sitting-room. He made a sort of spring at the young man, and shook him heartily by the hand.

"Why, Phil, my boy, I am glad to see you!" he cried. "But how is it you haven't turned up at our diggings—the Alexandra, you know? Between ourselves I'm sure little Edie would be uncommonly glad to see you—you know it doesn't do to take all my little girl says for gospel. And also"—here the Squire looked a little nervously over his shoulder to make sure there were no listeners—"between ourselves, I would very much prefer you for a son-in-law to your uncle, much as I respect him."

Phil felt sorely troubled. All in a flash there seemed to pass before him the old happy lovemaking days at Stanham, when he had had a clear, untroubled conscience, a true and honest heart.

Heaven help him! The Phil of those days had been dead and buried for many a month past.

Colonel Wickham, coming in at that moment, must have heard the Squire's concluding words, for he said very gravely, as he shook hands:

"The young people appear to have decided that matter in a manner that does not admit of interference;" and looked so keenly at Phil as he said it that Phil was bound to take it as a straightforward meant-to-be-answered question.

It was one, however, that he had no

intention of answering. He jumped up hurriedly, and took his hat.

"I've an engagement—I'm over-due now, in fact," he cried, pulling out his watch. "I only came in to say I can't dine with you to-night, nor to-morrow night, nor any night this week; I'm up to my eyes in engagements just now."

Then he said a hurried good-bye to Mr. Fairfax, and made his way quickly out of the room and down the stairs.

Edie had her habit on in five minutes. She waited for her father exactly another five minutes; then she made up her mind that he must have said all he had to say to Colonel Wickham—before he had even had time to get to the end of Piccadilly—rang the bell, ordered another cab to be fetched for her, jumped into it, and followed on the Squire's traces as fast as possible.

"For," as she characteristically said to herself as she went along, "I would sooner be driving backwards and forwards all day than waiting in that fusty room."

So Phil, going downstairs in hot haste, found himself suddenly confronted by a small dark figure in riding-hat and habit, whom his heart told him all in a bound was Edie Fairfax—his own Edie not so very long ago.

Edie looked up at him. Phil looked down on her.

"Oh, Phil!" "Oh, Edie!" almost simultaneously escaped their lips, in precisely their old easy, familiar style, as each gave a great start.

Then there seemed to come a hot rush of blood to Edie's brain; the staircase, the walls, grew misty and indistinct to her; she stumbled forward, catching her feet in her long skirt.

"Take care, Edie, you will fall," said Phil, gathering together her habit into one thick fold, and putting it into her hand as he had many a hundred times before.

Where were all the grand speeches, questions, expostulations, Edie had planned to address to Phil the "very next time she set eyes on him"! Somehow not one of them rose to her lips now. She darted forward somewhat as one in a burning house, half blinded with smoke, makes a rush for the free air, reached the top of the stairs breathless, paused a moment outside the door, then dashed into Colonel Wickham's room, exclaiming in a terribly astonished tone:

"Why, papa, how much longer are you going to keep me waiting! I've been expect-

ing you back for the last hour and a half. We shall get nowhere to-day, unless we set off at once!"

And Phil went on his way down the stairs into the street, for the next ten or fifteen minutes finding thought simply an impossibility.

He was engaged to ride with Ellinor that morning, to lunch with her afterwards; but somehow neither engagement did he feel equal to fulfilling. Instead of making his way back through Piccadilly to Grosvenor Square, as he had intended, he turned down a by-street off the Strand, and went along the Embankment at an altogether reckless pace for a man who had on patent-leather boots, which he wished to present spotless in a lady's drawing-room half an hour afterwards.

If it be possible for a man all in a flash "in a moment of time" to see his lost Eden in another's face, that man was Phil Wickham, the face was Edie Fairfax's. The kindly hearty pressure of the Squire's hand had struck the key-note of his regrets over his dead past, the look into little Edie's upturned face had completed the chord. What a world of honest, simple, trustful sweetness had shone in that face, sadly changed though it was from the face on which he had imprinted his passionate kiss on that 1st of October, which seemed now, alas! so long ago. A face like Edie's of the smiling, childlike type does not age easily; tears somehow seem to wash away so readily, leaving no traces behind, and no amount of anxiety or worry will crimp it into wrinkles. But, nevertheless, there will come a wistful sadness into the eyes, a childish pleading mournfulness will gather about the mouth, far more touching than any amount of wrinkles or tears.

Phil thought of Ellinor's eyes, and he thought of Edie's. Ellinor's could blaze with a passion, could deepen and darken with a tenderness for which little Edie's had no capacity; but the sweet, trustful, honest gaze, the soft, pleading, wistful look, she could no more put into them than she could have gathered and appropriated the light of the stars of heaven.

It was fully four o'clock in the afternoon before he made his way to Grosvenor Square. He found Ellinor alone in the drawing-room; she had denied herself to all visitors but him. She was seated as usual on a big sofa; a little to her right hand stood a table with a pile of neatly-written notes upon it. She did not rise to



meet Phil, but she smiled sweetly enough up at him.

"Late, late—so late!" she said; "I have a great mind to say as the song does, 'You cannot enter in.'" Then she noticed his dusty and disquieted appearance, and in a somewhat concerned tone asked him: "What is it—what has happened?"

His answer was not to the point. He seated himself beside her on the sofa, took her hand in his, looking up forlornly into her beautiful face.

"Ellinor," he said, "for the love of Heaven be to me more than you are, or be nothing at all to me!"

It was less a speech than a moan, the sort of prayer a man dying on a battlefield might utter could he see an angel passing to and fro amid the broken, bleeding hosts; a plaint which meant, "Give me life or give me death, whichever you have at command."

Then he dropped her hand, bowed his head on the small table beside them, hiding his face in his outstretched arms.

Ellinor did not show her surprise. She half turned and faced him, answering his meaning rather than his exact words.

"Supposing," she said quietly, "I have given you all I have to bestow, and have nothing left to give. What then?"

Phil made no reply, nor did he lift his head.

Ellinor went on:

"Shall I take you at your word and say, 'I will be nothing to you, take your liberty and go,'"

Had she rehearsed these words for dramatic purposes, a score or so of times before, she could not have said them with a more poignant scorn.

Phil lifted up his white wretched face.

"Great Heavens—no!" he cried; "not to purchase my salvation could I give you up now;" and he threw his arms about her and held her tight to his heart. "Yet," he cried, suddenly releasing her and almost pushing her from him, "Good Heaven! what has come to me? Am I going mad, or is it possible for a man to love two women at one and the same time."

He had evidently forgotten the assertion he had made to Edie so serenely once upon a time that "A man's eyes might be fascinated while his heart remained untouched and his brain condemned."

A look of unmitigated scorn overspread Ellinor's face—much such a look as hers might the "Queen with swarthy cheeks and bold, black eyes" have flashed upon

her Roman Antony when she insinuated so softly, "Fulvia perchance is angry."

"Ah," she said, in low yet contemptuous tones, "the thing stands explained now. You have seen my little country cousin, and she has upset your nerves."

"My little country cousin" was the designation Ellinor generally bestowed upon Edie. To say truth, the fact of Edie having been born and bred in the country was the most vulnerable point in her armour Ellinor could discover, and she laid her finger upon it accordingly. Had Edie been uncultured, unrefined in her manners, awkward or barbaric in her dress (adopting such atrocities as artificial flowers, bead trimmings, plaids, or dyed feathers), Ellinor would have had a whole vocabulary of pointed epithets at command. But as Edie erred in none of these respects, "My little country cousin" was the only term with a sufficiency of truth in it to pin the epithet to Edie's shoulders.

Phil writhed at one and the same time under Ellinor's scorn and the allusion to Edie.

"You don't see, you don't understand," he began hesitatingly. Then he jumped to his feet, and began a hurried, nervous walk up and down the long room.

"Yes, I do see—I do understand," answered Ellinor calmly, remaining where she was on the sofa. "You have met somewhere, as I said just now, my little country cousin, and your eyes for the moment are full of her. Very well, so much the better. Compare us one with the other, in leisurely, impartial fashion; look well at me—you have evidently quite enough of little Edie in your eyes—and decide upon which of us you will bestow your golden apple."

She leaned back, placidly folding her hands on her lap. Royally beautiful she looked, seated there on her dark crimson satin sofa. She had on a dress of a deep, rich amber shade. A blood-red rose, fastened at her throat with a big topaz, was her only ornament. A dazzling May sunshine came flooding the room through a window immediately opposite; it lighted up every delicate carnation tint in the exquisitely transparent complexion, burnished the crown of russet-brown hair, added a glow and a brilliancy to the large, full-pupilled eyes.

As she sat thus enthroned, a very queen of beauty, somehow even the tables and chairs about her seemed to grow commonplace and insignificant accessories to the

stately picture. A Holbein or a Titian might have given her a worthy background. None other.

And Phil all obediently stood there, looking, and looking at her, and, not being compounded of either marble or ice, it is not to be wondered at if every one of his senses was dazzled and bewildered, and his last shred of common-sense annihilated.

Ellinor let him look a second or two, then a shade of sadness swept over her face.

"After all," she said sweetly, looking up at him, "it is not worth while taking very long over your decision; it will be for such a short time. See, here are the invitations for my first and last ball. Gretchen has written them every one. Hasn't she a neat, clear hand?"

Phil somehow stumbled across the room and knelt at her very feet.

With one hand he swept away the pile of neatly-written notes; with the other he encircled her waist, drawing her close, closer to him, as though he felt that every passing moment, even, were drawing her out of his clasp.

"Ellinor," he said passionately, brokenly, "for the love of Heaven, do not torture me in this way! I do not believe one word of what those wretched doctors have said. No one, I vow, shall separate us, come what may. I will not give you up—I swear it! I will marry you—I vow before Heaven I will, let who may say nay. I will go with you wherever you may go; I will die with you if you must die. A man's life, at any rate, is in his own keeping, to do as he pleases with."

Ellinor released herself from his clasp, and rose from her sofa. Once more her lip curled, and her eyes flashed scorn.

"I can understand now what is the meaning of the proverb, 'Show me a man's friends, and I'll tell you what he is like.' I never before detected in you the slightest resemblance to Rodney Thorne."

Phil rose hastily to his feet.

"Why—why?" he stammered. "What have I done to make myself like poor Rodney?"

"You knelt at my feet just now with much such a puny wail or threat as he used to indulge in from time to time—about your life being in your own hands, and that sort of thing. But worse than that—like him, you have broken faith with me."

"Broken faith with you?"

"Yes, broken faith with me. Did not Rodney swear to me he would go quietly home and marry Lucy Selwyn, and did you

not vow to me when I suffered myself to be engaged to you that no allusion to marriage or death should ever pass your lips?"

"Oh, my love, my love!" cried Phil, catching her once more in his arms, and holding her close to his heart, while he kissed hotly her lips, cheeks, hair, "in your presence a man can have only these two thoughts in his mind—love or death!"

She let him kiss her now without rebuke—nay, more, smiled up into his eyes with a look that has many a time ere this made a man "drink the cup of a costly death."

"I governed men by change, and so I swayed all moods," once an Eastern Queen seemed to sing in a poet's ear.

Ellinor, without making a song about it, had certainly attained a marvellous proficiency in the art.

#### CHAPTER XLVI.

WHY Miss Yorke sent out the invitations to her ball a good fortnight or three weeks sooner than she had originally intended requires explanation.

On the morning of the day that Phil had encountered Edie on the stairs of his uncle's hotel, Ellinor had received a letter from her mother informing her of a sudden change for the worse in Juliet's health, and of the doctor's orders that they should immediately quit Mentone—now becoming too warm for the invalid—and undertake a long sea voyage, if possible to Australia or New Zealand.

"By the time this reaches you," wrote the hapless mother, "we shall have set sail for Sydney, New South Wales. I will write to you as often as possible by any passing steamer, but, ah me! I greatly fear my next letter may be a black-bordered one."

Ellinor sat for nearly half an hour in her dressing-room with this letter lying on her lap, lost in deep, concentrated thought.

Then she rang the bell.

"You know my mother's writing, Gretchen," she asked, when the maid made her appearance.

Gretchen assured her mistress that she did.

"Very well," Ellinor went on, "for the future no letter from her is to be given to me. You always bring my letters to me; stop those from my mother, even if one comes with a black-edged envelope, put them into one of my empty jewel-cases, and keep the key yourself—you understand?"

"Yes, madame."

"And there is something else. I will give my ball a fortnight or so earlier than

I at first intended, so it will be better for you to write the invitations this morning."

"Yes, madame."

"And, by the way, Mr. Effingham will not design my dress for me this time. Artists do tea-gowns well enough—anything, in fact, where the lines are strictly prescribed for them, but over a ball-dress they grow eccentric at times. So let me have the design from Madame Blanche in good time. I want to think well over this dress of mine."

But it may be questioned whether Harry Effingham would have been willing to devote his energies to the designing of a ball-dress for Miss Yorke, even if the momentous undertaking had been entrusted to his skill. For the simple reason that he had just then made for himself another outlet for his eccentricity by eloping with and marrying a barmaid.

Driven to desperation by Ellinor's sudden and complete severance of their former friendly intercourse, he had adopted this by no means original channel for his disappointed love.

This news in due course reached Ellinor's ears. It called forth a contemptuous smile from the beauty and a "Thank Heaven, we've heard the last of him now!" Nothing more.

What more, indeed, could be expected of her? She had already decided him to be incompetent to design her ball-dress; of tea-gowns she had an ample supply, more than enough to last her till—well, say till the "end of the season." Her portrait, superbly painted, hung in the Academy, and in the Grosvenor Gallery also. Of what further use could R.A.s. of any degree be to her now?

At least so she said to Uncle Hugh frankly enough by way of dismissing the subject, when the old gentleman a little sarcastically commented on the folly of this artist friend of hers.

Uncle Hugh stared at her a moment, scarcely catching her full meaning.

"I always told you so, Nell, when you were so bent on giving sittings to the young fools, and having your portrait stuck about here, there, and everywhere——" he began.

But Ellinor cut him short with a question.

"Uncle Hugh," she queried, abruptly, and a little sharply, "what about my yacht? Have you found one likely to suit me?"

A change swept over Uncle Hugh's face. He had just come in from a nice little

dinner at his club, eaten with some congenial bachelor friends, after which he had been fortunate enough to retrieve certain previous losses at baccarat and napoleon. Skulls and cross-bones were to close his feast, it seemed, and obscure the pleasant little impressions of joviality he had brought away with him.

He answered gravely enough:

"Yes, I've purchased through my agent a magnificent schooner, built for the Grand Duke Albert Saxe Marienbad, but not required by him for the simple reason that he can't afford to pay for her now she's finished."

"Thank you, Uncle Hugh. What about the decorations? There's only one man who could carry out exactly what I want done."

"That man shall be employed, Nell," said Uncle Hugh a little huskily, and going backwards a step towards the door as he spoke, anxious to beat a retreat before a subject that always set him shivering; "but you had better come down one morning with me to Greenhithe, and have a look at her. She has splendid accommodation, and is a magnificent sailer—has a tremendous spread of canvas. The Kestrel, or Penguin, or Lapwing, or some other wing she's called."

"The name must be altered," said Ellinor with decision. "She might as well be called the Mary Ann or the Water-Lily at once. I should say there were at least a dozen or two of Kestrels, Penguins, or Lapwings afloat at the present moment."

"Well, my dear, call her what you please," said Uncle Hugh, retreating still nearer to the door, and farther from the grim, repellent subject; "only let me know when you've made up your mind what she's to be christened."

"I'll think about it," said Ellinor slowly.

"But, Uncle Hugh, there's one thing that wants no thinking over, upon which my mind is quite made up. The yacht, whatever she's to be called, must be completed and lying off Cowes by the third week in July—will you remember, Uncle Hugh!—by the third week in July."

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MISS PRISCILLA'S FOLLY.

CHAPTER I.

"I CONSIDER your conduct so foolish as to be inexcusable," the rector said severely.

This from Mr. Hornby was scathing censure, and as Miss Priscilla heard him her sobs increased.

"I am very sorry," she murmured heart-brokenly. "If I had known you would have cared so much, I should not have dared to do it."

"As if my caring mattered!" he said to himself with despondent amazement. "Why, you poor foolish creature, what can it matter to me except for your sake? But to think that you have beggared yourself—literally, actually beggared yourself, and at your age, too!"

"I am only a little over forty," Miss Priscilla ventured with meek protest.

"But forty, and penniless, and incapable of anything!"

Miss Priscilla made a faintly rebellious movement.

"I mean to teach," she said with wavering confidence.

"Teach! Why, you are years behind the time. Nowadays, girls learn astronomy, and chemistry, and Greek, ma'am—Greek!"

Miss Priscilla sobbed again.

"And for a young scapegrace who never was worth his salt. And all that money in the Three per Cents, too! Oh, I have no patience with it all!"

Miss Priscilla rubbed her eyes, and looked up at him pitifully.

"Would you have had me let him go to prison?" she asked.

"I would." Mr. Hornby closed his mouth determinedly as he spoke. "In this world whose sins should bear the punishment."

"He was Letty's son," Miss Priscilla said, "and Letty was more to me than ever sister was before. How could I let him be ruined, just that I might fare sumptuously and live at ease?"

"Of course you felt that," the rector admitted reluctantly; "but all the same, he was a criminal, and as such had a right to bear his own punishment."

Miss Priscilla rose to go.

"If the Deity you preach were as merciful as you are, it had been a sad thing for the world," she said. "I told you his sin, poor boy, because I wished to have nothing secret from you, for the sake of your old friendship, and you only taunt me with it. Oh, you are very cruel!"

He put out his hand to stop her.

"You must forgive me if I have spoken harshly," he said. "I am only harsh because I feel so much. What do you mean to do? This is a hard world for women who are penniless."

"The Lord takes care of fools and children," Miss Priscilla answered with a break in her voice.

"Are you angry still?" He extended his hand as he spoke. And Miss Priscilla took it, her heart softening.

"We have been friends always, and I

should not like us to quarrel now at the last," she said.

"At the last?" he echoed, looking at her enquiringly.

"Of course I must leave the village. One does not live, as I have done hitherto, on nothing."

"Nothing! And is it as bad as that?"

"I have a couple of hundreds left, and the furniture," she answered, smiling at him faintly.

"You have not told me how it came about—the necessity for your sacrifice, I mean," he said.

"I do not know all the particulars; but I can guess." She shivered slightly as she spoke. "There was an extravagant youth, and a position of trust, and temptation, and a fall, and ruin, unless a miracle interposed."

"And you wrought the miracle?" Mr. Hornby said, with a rather uncertain smile quivering about his lips.

"I did all I could to save him from the consequences of his deed."

"And was the—the deficit for a large sum?"

"For three thousand seven hundred pounds. Had it been for much more I should have been powerless."

"In your place I should not have interfered," Mr. Hornby said, sighing. "The very magnitude of the offence shows a hardened nature."

Miss Priscilla was weeping bitterly now.

"It is too late to think of that," she said. "The thing is done and irrevocable. I did not tell you before, lest you should try to hinder me. He has gone abroad to make a fresh start, and to do well, I trust and believe. He was Letty's son."

"And you mean to teach?" looking at her pitifully.

"It is all I can think of."

"But it is such a hard life, and so difficult to find a place in even, nowadays, without a special training."

"No matter; I can only try my very best." She held out her hand to him. "Good-bye," she said; "don't fret about me, I am more hopeful than you are. I have good health and all my wits about me, and I am ready to do my best at anything that offers."

She shook hands with him, the perturbation in his eyes meeting the striving smile in hers, and then she went out, and down the rectory lawn, and through the little gate that led into the village street.

It was a beautiful sunshiny June day. From hill-top to hill-top the light seemed suspended in gossamer webs, and the slumberous peace that stretched over land and sea was too perfect for common sounds to break. In Fairview village drowsy quiet was paramount. Even the roses, growing in front of rustic porticoes, swayed their languid heads in the faint breezes somnolently. A few children busied with dust-pies in the shadow of the houses, smiled at Miss Priscilla as she passed; a few rustics loitering in the thoroughfare touched their forelocks with slow civility.

All the neighbourhood knew Miss Priscilla, and, knowing her, knew all her history. She had lived among them always. She was Squire Compton's only surviving child, and she was reputed fabulously wealthy here, where money was so rare. It did not matter that Squire Compton had been held poor enough in his day, and that all he left had been divided equally between Priscilla and Edward Glynn, his grandson. Miss Priscilla must be wealthy, judged by her large benevolences. Of course money does accumulate in the hands of women, and Miss Priscilla was economical in her personal expenditure; and besides, did not the way of life of Mr. Edward Glynn prove how much wealth must have fallen between them?

It was not often that Mr. Edward Glynn had chosen to honour Fairview with his presence, but from the few occasions when it had been favoured, it retained a vivid memory of his elegant bearing, his costly equipments, and his general suggestiveness of luxury and ease. Fairview was quite proud that such a distinguished gentleman owed his origin to it, however remotely, though a few of the oldest inhabitants did venture to whisper among themselves that Mr. Edward Glynn was very like his father, and that his father had been only a curse to everyone who had ever trusted him. Of course they would not have said this to Miss Priscilla for the world, and they only breathed it to each other in confidential moments, for Miss Priscilla was a kind of little Providence in the neighbourhood, and a word against aught belonging to her was disloyalty.

As she passed down the still street that calm June afternoon, one and another offered her a friendly greeting; and, observation being none too acute here, no one noticed with what a frozen smile she answered. She was almost at her own

door when a little girl on crutches hobbled after her and put a rose into her hand.

"It is off the bush you gave me," she said, and then Miss Priscilla drew down her veil and hurried on, weeping. How was she to leave these hearts that loved her, and the happy home in which she had spent her entire lifetime?

Her little maidservant opened the door for her without waiting for her knock, and took her bonnet and shawl, and brought her slippers and a cup of tea. Miss Priscilla drank the cheering beverage to give her courage, and then she went into the little kitchen where the little maiden sat sewing by the hearth.

"Jane," Miss Priscilla said, clearing her throat, "Jane, I wish to say that at the end of the month you and I shall be obliged to part."

Jane's face assumed an expression of dismay, but she only said, "Lor!" She felt at that moment a whole volume of things, but being an uncultured person, she only said "Lor!"

"It is no fault of yours, Jane," Miss Priscilla continued with painstaking precision; "I have found you everything that a girl should be, and I only part with you because I have decided to leave Fairview."

Jane sighed faintly, and her round eyes grew rounder.

"I cannot tell how soon I may leave the village," Miss Priscilla went on, "but in any case you will have your month's wages."

"I don't want no wages but what I've earned, ma'am," Jane answered with severity.

"I would take you with me if it were possible," Miss Priscilla ventured explanatorily, "but it is quite out of the question."

"Don't mention it, ma'am; it's no matter, I'm sure, though I have served you faithful." And then Jane clattered among the fire-irons, and hunted the cat from his cosy nook by the fire, with muttered exclamations of contempt for his laziness, and finally drove Miss Priscilla from the kitchen, thus depriving both of them of the solace of mutual sympathy.

Miss Priscilla was disappointed in Jane, but Miss Priscilla's ideas on many things were likely to suffer metamorphoses. It was only now that this quixotic lady was beginning to realise the entire consequences of all she had done for the sake of Letty's boy. When danger and disgrace had loomed large and terrible above him, her only thought had been—was there time to

save him, and would the sacrifices of her whole fortune be enough? But when the deed was done, when the culprit had sailed scathless away, and when she was left to break to her friends the story of her changed fortunes, then she realised the import and consequences of her action.

The old life, the life of prosperous, easy independence was over; she was a beggar, or but little better—one who fronts the world to ask something at its hands. Her small stock of powers and possibilities was now to be brought to judgment—and what were her powers and possibilities? Old-fashioned accomplishments, antiquated erudition, half-forgotten sciences, whose very outlines later developments had obliterated. As Mr. Hornby had said, she was ages behind the times. But it was too late to think of all this now, too late to remember her shyness, her spinster timidity; too late to regret her quiet life, and simple pleasures, and small sphere of usefulness. She had sacrificed all this to Letty's son, who perhaps scarcely thanked her, and she had no alternative now but to accept the consequences of her action.

## CHAPTER II.

MRS. THOMAS HORNBY sat at breakfast in a large, luxurious dining-room; and Mrs. Thomas Hornby looked large and luxurious herself. She wore a gown of conspicuous pattern, and had bits of colour interspersed in the laces of her cap, and many rings on her plump hands.

Opposite was her husband, the rector's brother, a man who asserted himself seldom. On either hand were the young Hornbys, who asserted themselves often.

The silver urn was hissing vigorously, and the other pieces of plate caught the sun's rays as they came broadly through the open window. Mr. Tom was reading the newspaper; Mrs. Tom was giving lessons in deportment to her offspring, who received instruction as reluctantly as is the wont of youth. It was only as Mr. Tom was about to take his way towards the omnibus that would bear him to the City, that his wife addressed him.

"I have had a letter from your brother George to-day."

Mr. Tom stopped in mid-career.

"Indeed! George is not a great correspondent."

"No; but like other people, he can write when he wants anything."

"Has he been begging of you for another

pet hobby?" Mr. Tom smiled faintly, as people do with whom smiles are rare.

"Not this time, but he has some woman on his hands, and he wants me to dispose of her."

"A woman. George!"

A flicker of amusement played over Mrs. Tom's face.

"Some person in his parish has got into trouble; a lady, he says, who has been comfortably provided for, but has chosen to bestow her fortune on a worthless relative, and so finds herself, in middle-life, at the mercy of the world. Serve her right, say I. I can do nothing for her."

"Now I wonder who that could be? There are not many moneyed ladies in Fairview." Mr. Tom looked reflective.

"Let me see. He gives her name. Compton—yes, Miss Priscilla Compton."

"Priscilla Compton." Mr. Tom sat down and let his particular omnibus follow its predecessors. "Why, she is our oldest friend. It was her father's influence that got George Fairview. What can have happened to her?"

"He only says that she has sacrificed her independence to the needs of some undeserving relative, and now wishes to work for her bread. Such folly, as if the world could find work for a woman grown old in idleness!"

"Priscilla Compton working for her bread! Dear, dear! I remember her a pretty girl that held her head as high as anyone. Why, once upon a time George worshipped the very ground she walked on, and now to think of him trying to get her a situation! Well, time does work wonders."

"Your brother loved her," Mrs. Tom said, looking at the letter with new interest.

"Yes, though I would not venture to say that he ever told her so."

"Yet he married another?"

"Yes; men do so sometimes, when an energetic woman catches them on the rebound." He looked at her, and uttered a little cackling laugh, that came awkwardly as though ashamed of itself.

"I suppose he is free to marry his first love now if he will," Mrs. Tom said coldly.

"And he'll do it—as sure as I live he'll do it!" Mr. Tom struck his hands together as he spoke. "Now that things are at a crisis with her——"

"You would like it—I do believe you would like it, though you know that our children are his heirs."

"Oh, hang it, Rebecca! Our children will be as rich as Jews, and why should we grudge him a fragment of contentment in his old age?"

Becoming suddenly conscious of the passage of time, Mr. Tom made his exit hastily, and his wife was left alone to ponder.

The rector was a widower and childless, his parish was a good one, and, as he had always lived economically, he must have a goodly store of accumulations now. Mrs. Tom liked money, and Mrs. Tom had managed to make many indirect streams trickle into her own pockets ere this, through management. Mrs. Tom would not have been guilty of a criminal action for the world, neither would she permit herself any course that might seem like scheming; but in her time Mrs. Tom had known the value of many artfully simple little dodges, and the chief of these was to remove temptation when she knew it might be formidable.

Mrs. Thomas Hornby had as many annual thousands as her husband's brother had hundreds, but what did that matter? Business was uncertain, said prudence; who could tell what a godsend the rector's savings might prove one day to her poor children! If she could help it, she would not permit this second marriage.

Mrs. Tom discussed the matter with herself, pondered on the possibility of circumstances playing into her hands, and finally decided that it was safest to rely only on herself. She sat quite still for half an hour, and then she rose with a rustle expressive of decision, and took her way up the wide, softly-carpeted stairs.

Fine rooms opened on either hand, fine pictures smiled down on her from the walls; but Mrs. Tom went on to a room at the end of the corridor, and opened the door.

A pale woman, who stood buttoning her gloves by the window, started and looked up timidly as Mrs. Tom sailed in.

"Are you going out, Miss Spence?"

"Yes; the children have asked for an early walk since the weather has grown so hot, and so I have taken them to the park for the last week after breakfast."

"You should have consulted me about it," Mrs. Tom said coldly.

"I did not think it mattered," the governess answered, shrinking a little. "They are to have a walk, and when they get it at the best time——"

"The best time is questionable; in any case, you should have consulted me."

Miss Spence did not answer that addressing this large, prosperous, self-assertive woman was an ordeal from which she shrank.

"Indeed I have often thought lately that you assume too much," Mrs. Tom went on. "You are too independent in your ways, too confident of your own infallibility." Miss Spence looked up at her with the soft, pleading eyes that were the sole beauty in her pale, plain little face. Mrs. Tom did not care to meet them as she continued: "And so I have decided that it would be better for us both to make a change."

"Very well, Mrs. Hornby."

The little governess accepted the fiat calmly, for the absence of hope teaches endurance; and then she went out with her pupils and paced the park, where the glory of the sunlight was falling like a benediction, and wondered why she had ever had the burden of life cast on her.

Meantime Mrs. Tom, indifferent to the fact that she had pushed heaven farther into the background of a desolate life, was writing a gushing letter to her dear brother at Fairview.

It was a hot afternoon in early July; there was not a cloud in the lofty dome of the sky, and the few trees dotted along the dusty highway flung dense shadows here and there, while in the distance the heat seemed to set the landscape dancing to a measure of its own. Mr. Hornby sighed several times as he went down the Fairview street, and more than once he frowned, as people do to whom, either in suggestion or in reality, something unpalatable has been offered. Perhaps the heat oppressed him, perhaps the dust annoyed him. For surely there could be nothing in the cheery letter folded in his breast-pocket that could vex anyone.

"Is Miss Priscilla at home?" He had stopped by the little oak door over which the roses and honeysuckle clustered so lovingly.

"Yes, sir." Jane had appeared in answer to his knock, and he noticed that she had lost the brisk, complacent bearing of former days.

"Then tell her I am here, please."

Mr. Hornby entered and seated himself on one of the pretty, chintz-covered chairs in Miss Priscilla's cool, fresh little drawing-room. How pretty everything was, from the handful of roses and ferns in the glass-dish to the light curtains swaying in

the breeze! But how could any adjunct of Miss Priscilla's ownership be other than pretty? And to fancy her toiling for a pittance in his brother Tom's household! Again the disgusted look spread itself over his countenance, and this time it could not be due either to the dust or to the sun.

"Have you heard of anything?" he said anxiously as Miss Priscilla entered.

"No; but you have." She wore a snowy cap and a gown of some soft stuff, and she was smiling at him, although there were troubled lines about brow and eyes.

"I! Oh no; it is worth nothing; only a letter from Tom's wife."

"And is she like all the rest, so anxious to help and so sorry—so very sorry, that she knows of nothing suitable just now?"

There was a little anger in the smile that played over Miss Priscilla's lips as she put her question.

"No; she does not write that exactly." He rose hurriedly, and went to the window, and stood looking out at the honey-sweet blossoms of the woodbine that pressed against the panes.

"Then what does she write? It is very important to me."

Mr. Hornby groaned.

"You will believe that I have done my very best for you?" he said anxiously.

"Yes, yes; but what is it?"

"Mrs. Tom Hornby wants a governess for her five children, and because I know you and recommend you, she will engage you if you wish."

"Oh, how good you are—how grateful I am!" Her lips quivered as she spoke, but she would not let the tears fall, though they nearly blinded her.

"And you would think of it?" looking at her mournfully.

"Of course I would; beggars must not be choosers. There are not likely to be many people eager to engage an old woman brought up to no employment. Besides, I want to teach, and I am very glad that I can make my essay in the household of a friend of yours."

"I do not hold myself responsible for Mrs. Tom," he answered.

"You mean to say she is not perfect? Well, neither am I, so we are likely to suit each other. Will you write to her, and ask her to let me know all she requires?"

"I cannot bear it. It hurts me horribly," the rector said with needless warmth.

"Don't be so foolish. I have brought it



all on myself. It will be time enough to pity me when I begin to complain."

"You would never do that—not if things were killing you."

"Possibly not. I was always better at scolding other people than at speaking of myself. But never mind me now. What will you say to your sister-in-law?"

"I shall tell her to come and meet you at my house, and make all her own arrangements, since you are willing to accept her offer."

Miss Priscilla looked at him with a little scorn.

"Mrs. Tom has been the first to offer me tangible help, and you will kindly write and say that I am very grateful, and that I await her orders."

She was more like her old self as she spoke than she had been since the hour of her sacrifice.

"I shall write to her that you will meet her at my house any time she wishes to see you," Mr. Hornby answered doggedly.

"But what will she think of that when my own house is here? Remember that she is my future employer, and that I want her approval in everything."

"But she is my sister-in-law and a domineering woman, and I want her to understand what I think of you, and what place I wish you to take in her household."

Miss Priscilla looked at him doubtfully.

"If only you don't make a mess of things after all," she said.

### CHAPTER III.

"SHE has not come."

"Did I not tell you so?"

Dismay and triumph struggled oddly for mastery on Miss Priscilla's face as she answered.

She was at the rectory door, where Mr. Hornby had come out to meet her, and as she faced him now, consternation began to creep over his countenance.

"She said she would come," he answered sheepishly.

"Of course; but that was before she had begun to consider. You know there was no reason in the world why I could not receive her at my own house."

"I thought it was best to have her here."

"And she did not think so."

Miss Priscilla sat down as she spoke, and untied her bonnet-strings, and the rector noticed that she was flushed and

breathed hurriedly, as though but little would be needed to make her cry.

"I am very sorry," he said penitently.

"It is not your fault, you meant well, and in any case I am no worse off than I was."

She wiped her eyes furtively as she spoke, and her host grew still more miserable.

"I never dreamed of this," he said. "And no one else would have played me such a shabby trick."

"Well, never mind. Let us take it for the best. But it does seem hard, when a likely thing arose, to lose it like this!"

"But she may come yet. There is another train at five, and she said positively that I might expect her. You will wait, won't you?"

"If you think there is any chance."

He had meant kindly, and he was very down-hearted, and so she could not bear to be hard on him. His face cleared.

"It will be quite like old times to have you here for an afternoon," he said.

Miss Priscilla assented, but not very cordially. Where there are diverse periods of old times in a life, it is sometimes difficult to tell which is referred to.

"It is a long time since you have spent a day here," Mr. Hornby continued, eager to make conversation.

"I have not been here since Mrs. Hornby died," Miss Priscilla answered gravely.

"You will notice changes," sighing.

Miss Priscilla assented, but did not commit herself to a statement of the form the changes seemed to take.

"We used to be a good deal about the rectory in our young days, Priscilla," he continued after a pause. "I think Mr. Maxwell was partial to us. Why, it seems like yesterday that he used to take us bird's-nesting in the woods."

"Yes; it does not seem an age ago, though you and I are old people."

"I suppose we are; and yet, do you know, Priscilla, I never felt myself younger than now! I never remember enjoying nature more, or finding more likeable qualities in ordinary people."

"Age makes us tolerant," Miss Priscilla said with a flicker of spiteful mirth.

"Yes, I suppose so; and yet I can't realise that it is so very long ago since I was a lad, and you the most beautiful girl in the world to me."

"You were very young then," Miss

Priscilla said coldly. "It must have been quite a year before you got married."

The rector's whole form seemed to droop from its momentary happy attitude.

"You never understood that, and it was sudden, I own," he said; "but I suppose in every life there are inexplicable occurrences."

"As if everyone did not know that she married you, and not you her, you poor goose! And serve you right too; I never pitied you," Miss Priscilla said to herself very clearly and emphatically; for she was only a woman, and his defection, though twenty years old, had power to move her still. Not that she held him wholly inexcusable for it, for it had been the foolish time of life with her then—the time when she had believed in heroes and felt a fine scorn of ordinary men. And so she had flouted him and held him aloof till it was too late.

It had been a little hard on her, though neither he nor anyone ever guessed it; and afterwards, when he returned as rector to the parish where he had been born (her influence working always for his benefit), she was one of the first to welcome him, and the readiest to find something good to say of the peevish, fretful wife who made life as hard for him as she knew how.

But all that was over long ago, though for a moment Miss Priscilla had felt as if the past were not so long past, and in that moment she had called Mr. Hornby, mentally, a poor goose; but, looking at his troubled face, her heart softened.

"One need not understand one's friends to approve of them," she said heartily.

Mr. Hornby sighed, his momentary expansion was over. For the time he felt that old things were quite ended.

"Looked back on, life is different from one's anticipations," he said sadly. "Not that I have not got more than my deserts, but still the award has been different from anything I expected."

"I think it is better, even for our happiness, that results of all we do are in other hands than ours," she answered gently.

"No doubt, no doubt; but still——"

He stopped, as though his thoughts would not shape themselves to any words that fitted the occasion.

They had been sitting all this time in the bleak, damp little drawing-room, and, whether from the conversation or from the atmosphere, she felt chilled and depressed, though bright sunshine lay athwart the

land. The rectory was a cheerless house now, with dusty decorations dragging from the spotted grates, and long cobwebs hanging unnoticed in dim corners. And once she had known him so fond of brightness, and free air, and sunlight. Poor George! Of course, he was no more neglected than are other lonely men, but having known him young and hopeful, his circumstances struck her with a melancholy sense of contrast. It was like Miss Priscilla to forget her own immediate troubles in pitying someone else.

The lunch made a diversion, though it was not what could be called, strictly speaking, an enlivening repast. A grim serving-woman waited on them and handed them cold plates with an air of protest, and her presence, taken in conjunction with the dim glasses and spotted cutlery, made Miss Priscilla very unhappy.

"He has seven hundred a year if he has a penny; and yet everything is perfectly dreadful," she said to herself, while his good-natured hospitality over the soaked potatoes, and hard peas, and underdone mutton gave her a tremulous inclination to laugh and cry together.

But all this time dark clouds had been piling themselves in the west, and a sharp wind had begun to blow coldly, so that when a messenger came to call the rector urgently to a death-bed, Miss Priscilla became suddenly aware that a storm was threatening.

"You must wrap up well," she said as he prepared to go; "you know you are not young enough to run needless risks;" and he thanked her smilingly for the unpalatable information.

"You will make yourself quite at home during my absence," he said, and went away cheerfully on his melancholy errand.

The house looked worse to Miss Priscilla when she was left alone in it. The furniture seemed to acquire an uncomfortable humanness suddenly; the mirrors stared at her, the chairs held themselves stiffly aloof, and the arabesques on the walls developed countenances which eyed her inquisitively. She bore it as long as she could, then she rang the bell nervously.

"I shall take off my bonnet, if you will kindly show me the way to a bedroom," she said, accosting the grim woman-servant with friendly warmth.

The woman surveyed her with hostility, sniffed unpleasantly, and preceded her up the staircase without answering.

Arrived in a neglected chamber, Miss

Priscilla looked round her with the inevitable curiosity that spinsters bring to bear on the abodes of bachelors or widowers. The pretty paper on the walls was mildewed, the brown holland blinds were dropping from their rusty nails, and the mirror was so dim that she could not refrain from drawing a finger across its surface. Then she blushed at her action. "What an old maid I am growing!" she said, and effaced the traces of her handiwork.

"Master allows no one in the study," the servant informed her as she approached the door on her descent.

"Your master will not mind me," she said, turning the handle and entering.

Here, too, the demon of neglect and disorder reigned supreme; the grate was reddened in spots by the last shower down the chimney; the inkstand was filled with a thick sediment, and a heap of pre-adamite pens lay beside it; when she selected a book from the shelves it blackened her fingers; when she sat down, the chair retained an outline of her form. "It is perfectly disgraceful!" she said, flushing angrily; "and to think of that horrible woman pretending to serve him! And, of course, he, poor dear, notices nothing."

Miss Priscilla was in a scornfully indignant mood, otherwise she would not have ventured to jerk the bell as she did. "Bring me a duster, please," she said when the woman appeared. The latter tossed her head wrathfully, and waited for an explanation. None being vouchsafed, she flounced off, and presently returned with a nondescript article, which she offered at arm's-length. Miss Priscilla thanked her politely, closed the door after her carefully, and then set to work. She did not reason about what she was doing, she only felt that if she was to sit in that room it must be clean first, and, with her snowy cuffs laid aside and her sleeves tucked up, she got so into the spirit of her occupation that she sang softly to herself over it. There was not a thing she touched that she did not renovate, and when all was tidy, and the roses, gathered an hour ago, were pouring their fragrance from a jar on the centre-table, Miss Priscilla sat down and sighed. Meantime, the rain had begun to fall sharply, and the wind to whistle shrilly in the keyhole, and Miss Priscilla bethought herself of the luckless pedestrian.

"When Mr. Hornby is out in rain, what do you do?" she said, walking boldly into the kitchen, and assailing the enemy in her stronghold.

"Do? Why, nothing. What is there to do?" gruffly.

"Do you not have a fire lighted for him and his warm things waiting?"

"The master has no old maid's ways that I know of, and, if you please, missis, you will leave me to mind my own business in the house where I have given great satisfaction for over five year." This self-satisfied person leant herself in a threatening attitude against the table as she spoke, and looked at the intruder sourly.

"Your business is to make your master comfortable, and I am sure you have no stronger desire than to do so," Miss Priscilla answered sweetly.

"We never have fires in the rooms before September."

"And, in a general way, that is quite right," Miss Priscilla pursued with the same serpent-like smoothness; "but, on exceptional days, would you not think it wise to break your rule?"

"Master never asks for a fire, not if it rains ever so," was the uncompromising rejoinder.

"Then would you not think it well to surprise him for once? He and I have been friends for nearly forty years, and as he is not very strong, I should like to know that he is not running any risk. Wettings are dangerous, you know, and I dare say you and I would have difficulty in finding his like again." The woman hesitated still, and then this clever Miss Priscilla looked at her watch and notified the necessity that she would be under of returning home soon.

It was after five now, and all chance of Mrs. Tom's appearance that day was ended, but, in the ardour of her work, Miss Priscilla had momentarily forgotten the object of her visit to the rectory.

Three things in her last remarks had mollified Miss Gaunt: first, she had known Mr. Hornby for forty years, and, therefore, was not likely to prove fatal to his peace of mind; second, she was about to remove her obnoxious presence from the rectory forthwith; third, the rector was really a phenomenon among masters.

Actuated by a variety of motives, Miss Gaunt bestirred herself, and in ten minutes a good fire was piled in the grate, and after a little preliminary sputtering and puffing, consented to burn cheerfully. Just as if to convince the rector's guest that she knew what was what, and could have things right when she chose, the attendant spread a spotless cloth for tea, and brought forth

honey, and fresh butter, reserved, no doubt, for her own use in a general way, and made the toast delicately and crisply, and, being then mollified by her success, grew amiable, and urged Miss Priscilla not to think of venturing out in such soaking weather, as Mr. Hornby was sure to be in presently.

Miss Priscilla went to the window and looked out dubiously. The wide-open roses were hanging their heads dejectedly, the mignonette was stirring rebelliously in the wind, and the vivid greenness of the spongy turf showed how thoroughly it had been soaked. Rain was falling still, but occasional rifts in the clouds gave promise of improvement by-and-by. She decided, therefore, to await it.

The rector felt, on his return, as if a change had come to the whole world. To find himself cosily, and comfortably, and cheerfully at tea by his own fireside, with Miss Priscilla, rosy from her past exertions, smiling opposite him, and expressing a kindly interest in all he had to tell, delighted him somehow. He could not have accounted for it, but he felt as if he would like to go to sleep then and there to the musical accompaniment of clinking silver and china and a woman's voice. Not that he ever indulged in an afternoon's nap, but he felt so soothed and rested, it seemed as if the next step must be slumber. But Mr. Hornby was polite, if he was anything. He shook off the drowsy influence, discussed Mrs. Tom and the best way to reach her, feeling more than ever how sad it was that Priscilla should fall into her clutches, so that before his guest was bonneted for her return home, the sun had set, and the crescent moon asserted itself boldly in the watery sky.

"I shall go down the village with you," Mr. Hornby said when she wished to say good-bye; and in spite of her demurrings, he got his thick boots and overcoat, and sallied forth by her side.

In the air there was the softness of recent rain; the stocks and gillyflowers were pouring out incense to the moon, while an undaunted nightingale sang lustily in a neighbouring tree.

In the faint light, Miss Priscilla looked as pretty as she had done twenty years before, and more than once Mr. Hornby caught himself looking at her furtively, as he had done when she had been a dainty girl and he a great, undeveloped school-boy.

And to think of her now as the governess to Mrs. Tom's children, snubbed and

patronised by that pompous person alternately, and placed in that position by his intervention, too! He grew quite hot when he spoke of it. It would be bad enough to lose her out of his life; to put her into Mrs. Tom's clutches was unbearable.

"But what alternative have I?" she asked with a little scorn of his pusillanimity. "When one is in a strait, one must fit oneself to hard circumstances."

They were close to her door now, and he put out his hand to detain her when she would have raised the knocker.

"Would you not be happier at Fairview with me—as my wife?" he said hesitatingly.

She wheeled round on him so swiftly that she startled him.

"Is it pity?" she said with a quiver in her voice.

"Pity! Who could connect the idea of pity with you? Why, I only feel as if I had nothing to offer you worthy of your acceptance."

She did not speak, and he went on after a pause:

"I have looked upon you always as the one woman in the world worth being faithful to, whether your love rewarded the faithfulness or not."

For a moment she had a tremulous inclination to laugh, but she suppressed it, as she suppressed the apt and saucy answer that rose to her lips. Life was sad enough without the further complication of needless quarrels.

"Would you have told me this only for my extremity?" she asked softly.

"I do not think I should have dared."

"Then, in that case, I am glad I gave my money to Edward Glynn."

And all this time Mrs. Tom's telegram, in its orange envelope, was calmly reposing in Miss Priscilla's parlour. Telegrams were rare at Fairview, the nearest office being three miles away, and Miss Priscilla's Jane had never seen one before.

Jane concluded, from its envelope, also from its unstamped condition, that it was far less important than a letter, and never thought that it might be wise to send it after her mistress.

"Sorry I cannot go to Fairview," so ran Mrs. Tom's message. "Circumstances have arisen to detain me at home. I consider you engaged, and shall expect you on the 1st."

"Am grateful for your kindness, but was previously engaged to remain at

Fairview," Miss Priscilla telegraphed back, while blessing the laconic mode of communication which spared her feelings and her old-maidenly blushes.

Mrs. Tom never thought of the rector's second marriage without wrath and scorn. At his age, and with a sweet godchild like her Georgie to bestow his affections on! And to marry a penniless, old-fashioned woman, when there was a sister of her own and other suitable persons within reach, if making a fool of himself was imperative!

With a strong conviction of her own probity, Mrs. Tom made up her mind to ignore the rector and his wife throughout their future.

Whatever anguish this decision may have caused at the rectory, all signs of it were carefully concealed by George and Priscilla, and no one seeing them, as, hand-in-hand, they go down the hillside of life, would ever guess that a canker is gnawing at the root of their content.

Jane has replaced Miss Gaunt in the rectory kitchen, but the latter indemnifies herself for her wrongs by relating to all her gossips in the village how Miss Priscilla swept and dusted herself into the rector's affections.

As to Mr. Edward Glynn, there is every probability that he will prove himself better than Mr. Hornby's opinion of him, and it may be that the bread—literally her daily bread—which Miss Priscilla flung so lavishly on the waters, will return abundantly after many days.

## "ECHO."

### CHAPTER I.

THE London season was at its height. The days and nights swept on with their endless whirl of gaieties. Light feet waltzed, and smiling lips murmured soft words, which meant a great deal, or so little that the flower-perfumed breath of the very next ballroom wafted them away, as the down of the thistle is borne by the first light-winged breeze.

And eyes sparkled and laughed, or wept bitter tears when no one watched; and hearts rejoiced and hoped, or longed and grew weary unto death.

But society life only concerned itself with the smiles, and, with much prudence and reason, ignored such foolish things as tears.

Miss Rathborne, playing a most important part in that brilliant society life, certainly did not trouble herself about such trifles.

Her eyes were the brightest, and her feet the lightest of all that restless and careless throng of pleasure-worshippers. And, counting lovers by dozens, and flatterers by hundreds—with friends not a few, and of acquaintances many—whose rule as one of society's queens of beauty no one disputed, the richest heiress of the season, who would dream of asking if a sigh lurked behind the bright smile with which Miss Rathborne greeted the gay world of fashion?

What was the amazement, then, not to say consternation, of society, when one May night, or rather early morning, at the close of one of the most brilliant balls of the season, Miss Rathborne announced her intention of leaving town next day—just when her list of engagements was full to overflowing; when she had scarcely an hour for the next month to call her own; when her little feet rested on the edge of a perfect torrent of pleasures and amusements!

The first person to whom she made this startling announcement was her last partner at the ball, who stood now by her side in the flower-lined corridor, carefully drawing round her a soft wrap, and taking rather more time over it than was necessary. At least, so thought the tired and sleepy chaperon, waiting discreetly a little distance apart, and stifling her yawns in her fan.

But men do not pay much attention to chaperons when they are tendering these last services to their partners, especially when their partners are such as Miss Rathborne. Certainly this man did not.

He had just drawn the soft white fur close up to the pretty little chin, when he was startled for a moment into incredulous bewilderment by Miss Rathborne's sudden announcement.

"Going away! But— For an indefinite time! When—?"

"Yes," Miss Rathborne said with a little nod, the bright face looking deliciously pretty from its delicate framework of white lace, gathered carelessly round her brown head; "yes. You look frightened."

"So I am," he answered gravely, and it seemed as if his face had grown a shade paler. "Why are you going?" he asked, after a second's pause, during which she

bent to arrange the draperies of her ball-dress, which had been torn in the dance.

"I don't quite know," she said, looking up again. "For various reasons—perhaps to see the sun rise."

"You can see him rise in town," he answered, glancing up at the beams falling through the painted window on the landing above them. "In fact, I think he is getting up now."

"But he is more interesting to look at over the hills and the trees. And that reminds me, I want to see the trees too."

"There are trees in town," he said doubtfully, "if you will only look at them—green trees, too, just now."

"Green trees that make your heart ache, they are so soon marred with the smoke, and the dust, and the weary noises we make," she said, laughing, gathering up her bouquet and her fan from a seat near, and moving towards her chaperon, who had already made her way to the broad staircase leading into the hall below, where the tired serving-men did their best to speed the parting guests.

The man's face seemed to grow still graver as he followed Miss Rathborne. Then he suddenly stopped, and looked down at her.

"Why are you going into the country?" he asked abruptly.

"Have not I told you?" she said, smiling up at him.

"No; and you know that you have not."

"No," she answered, and she glanced down into the hall beneath, so that he could not see her eyes; "I have not. I am going to worship the great god Pan."

Then she laughed—a low laugh of intense amusement, it seemed almost of mocking fun; but whether the mocking was of him or of herself, he could not tell; only the doubt made his face graver.

"Miss Rathborne's carriage stops the way!" came up from the footmen in the hall below.

The chaperon, already downstairs, looked up with an expression of relief on her tired face. Miss Rathborne nodded and smiled to her.

"I must make haste," she said. "Poor Mrs. Vere is worn out."

"Wait one second," he said in a quick, low voice. "Have you told everybody of this—caprice?"

"Caprice! Yes; perhaps that is a good name for it. I did not think of that before."

"Or have you only told me?" he went on, apparently not noticing her interruption; "and if that be the case, why——"

"I have told no one but you as yet," she said, moving down another step, "and why I have told you—well, how can I say? It *was* a caprice, perhaps. Did you not say once that I was the embodiment of all the caprices which mar and make a woman?" She laughed lightly again. "Whatever it is—you know to-night that I am going away. To-morrow, all my other friends will know."

"You will not come back at all—not after having seen the sun rise, and looked at the fresh, unstained trees? Not at all, to us in London?"

"Ah, that is what I cannot say!" she said, turning with a quickened movement, and looking up at him as he stood on a higher step. But though she looked at him, there was a faint note in her voice, a curious light in her eyes, which gave the impression that she was answering some other question as well as his.

"It will depend," she went on, the subtle change in her voice dying away, and she turned once more to descend the stairs. "It will depend on so many things."

"Whether you see spots on the sun, or dust on even those country trees?"

"Yes." She laughed in answer to the mockery of his grave voice. "Or whether I grow weary of worshipping. You forget the great god Pan, Mr. Seymour."

He did not speak to her again, but when they reached the last stair he offered her his arm, and led her across the hall to the open door. Mrs. Vere was already in the carriage. As Mr. Seymour and Miss Rathborne passed through the hall-door, down the crimson carpeted steps, into the fresh sweet air and tender light of the early spring morning, still and unsullied yet from the din and the smoke that go up all day from the great Babylon, Miss Rathborne drew in a quick, long breath.

Mr. Seymour heard it, and he looked down at her, a curious expression coming into his own face, which was tired and pale in the searching morning light.

Hers was just faintly flushed, but he could not read in it the answer to the question his eyes were asking.

He put her into the brougham, and she sank down with a tired little sigh by the side of Mrs. Vere.

"Good-bye, Mr. Seymour. You will hear one day whether I find the country dull,"

she said, turning her face, all brightness, again to him. But he did not reply, and the brougham drove off, leaving him standing there while the light of the spring day, dawning into golden splendour in the east, fell upon him, as if in mockery of all that was artificial, and false, and restless, and stained with sin and folly, in the life he, and such as he, held to be the height of civilisation.

He was not given to moralising, but as he turned away into that morning light into which the carriage had disappeared, his face grew graver than ever.

"I don't understand," he muttered, "either her or myself. As she says, it is a woman's caprice. Are there any woman's caprices worth trying to understand? Or are hers more worth trying to understand than any other's? Might not I grow tired when I had understood them, just as she will grow tired of this caprice? Then what would become of us? Would she satisfy me, and—a title satisfy her?"

## CHAPTER II.

"DON'T you find it just the least little bit dull? Just the least little bit, as if you would like something to happen? An earthquake, you know, or a fire—or a visitor!"

"I find it very dull," said Mrs. Vere decidedly. "Just as dull as it can be!"

Miss Rathborne turned swiftly round from the window, and gazed at Mrs. Vere, sitting with a book in the most comfortable chair of the pretty, comfortable morning-room of Oakroyd Hall.

"Dull, when you were always finding fault with me in town, telling me that I was killing you and myself for want of rest! You've had plenty of rest for the last week, haven't you?"

Miss Rathborne's pretty hands went up to the back of her head in a gesture of despair, which had in it, it must be confessed, a touch of personal dismay.

"There's a medium in all things," said Mrs. Vere, cutting another leaf of her novel, with the air of a person much too depressed to care whether the hero was to be found dead or alive on the next page. "It is rather a sudden change—from London at the height of the season, to this country place, with all the houses empty for miles round, while their owners are having a good time in town."

Miss Rathborne sank down into the chair nearest her.

"The change was too severe," she said. "To think how we have managed to live through a whole week! And I've never once seen the sun rise!" this with a sudden recollection of her conversation on that London staircase. "But what would be the use of getting up? I should die if the day were longer."

"Well, but, Mildred, my dear child!"

"Don't—don't ask me any questions!" cried Mildred quickly, stretching out her hand to Mrs. Vere, who was looking at her with searching, puzzled eyes; "above all, don't ask me why I came down here. I don't know even that I could tell you!"

Then she sprang up quickly, and looked across the lawn again at the tender tracery of foliage, at the glinting lines of light, at the glories of spring leaf and flower, passing already into the flush and radiance of summer.

"See!" with a quick gesture towards it all, a gesture through which ran a curious thrill of passion; "perhaps it was because the country is so beautiful, and the town so hard and unsatisfying; perhaps——" Then her mood changed again, and she opened the French case-mented windows, and stepped out on to the gravel path. "It's just lovely!" she said, turning and laughing back to Mrs. Vere, who still sat watching her. "I am going to see how many more apple-blossoms have fallen to-day."

"What can it all mean?" said Mrs. Vere to herself, her face growing troubled as she looked after the graceful figure crossing the sun-flecked lawn. "There is something wrong. What is it? Can there really be anything between her and Fred Seymour? For her sake I hope not. I know her too well, for all her restless, pleasure-loving life, to believe she could ever be happy with a man such as he. She is true and pure, for all her frivolities and coquetries; and he, selfish, unprincipled, believing nothing. Yet she has encouraged him, and he, in spite of himself, and his fear of fettering himself by married life, does care for her, fight against the love as he will. But she—she must know what he is! Can ambition have anything to do with it? The old Duke must die soon, and then Seymour, thanks to his wonderful luck—in other words, the death of all intervening obstacles in the way of nearer claimants—will inherit the title and the enormous property. Can she be ambitious? She

would make a perfect Duchess. But no, no! That is not Mildred. There is something else. What can it be?"

But Mrs. Vere could find no answer to her anxious question.

With an impatient gesture, she tossed her book away. She had grown very fond of the girl during the two years she had lived with her, and her eyes, quickened by love, had discovered that there was some discord in Mildred's life.

"I may as well go and look at the apple-blossoms too. There's nothing else to do in the country at this time of the year."

She made her way across the lawn, through the shady paths, her town-loving and decidedly bored eyes not seeing any beauty in the glories of leaf and sun around them. At this time of the year, they would have preferred looking on bricks and mortar, and carriages and horses.

A little gateway, made in the thick privet-hedge encircling the flower-garden, led into the orchard.

Mrs. Vere passed through it, and went a few yards across the blossom-strewn ground, beneath the trees, white with their fragrant promise of abundant harvest. Then she suddenly stopped, her eyes opening wider in amazement.

Beneath one of the apple-trees stood Mildred talking to a man. A stranger. Mrs. Vere had never seen him before. Not from any of the neighbouring houses, for there was not a man at home just at that time. A man, too, her quick eyes recognised, of a very different kind to those they were in the habit of meeting in their frivolous world of fashion.

Tall, well-built, but with a slight stoop of the shoulders, as if they were often bent over some absorbing study, with features not handsome in form, but possessing the greatest of all beauty—the power of intellect and strength of will, combined with the tender kindness and purity of purpose of a woman; eyes deep-set and dreamy, when not taking the measure of any particular object, but searching and keen as a judge's when their interest was awakened; lines of toil and patient endurance round the mouth and eyes. A coat, not of the newest cut or wear; the face thin and pale, in spite of its sunburn, as if overwork and mental pressure had told even upon his strength; and the man talking to Mildred was at once classed by Mrs. Vere as something foreign to their own world of pleasure,

and ease, and wealth. Mildred caught sight of her between the trees, and beckoned her forward, her face smiling and faintly flushed with excitement.

"It isn't an earthquake," she said, "nor a conflagration, but a visitor! Let me introduce an old friend—at least, I have known him since I was a baby. You don't mind my calling you an old friend, do you?" with a swift turn to the visitor, whose grave, quiet face flushed slightly as he replied. "Mr. Galbraith." Mrs. Vere bowed, vaguely recognising in the name that of a man of science whose reputation was already European. "He is dreadfully clever, knows everything, has been everywhere, and despises everything——"

"Miss Rathborne," Mr. Galbraith exclaimed in half-bewildered remonstrance.

"Silly, I mean—foolish and frivolous, you know. Like—like those blossoms, for instance," she let a few she held flutter out of her hand. "They are foolish little flowers, carried away by every gust of wind. And this is Mrs. Vere, who takes such good care of me, and does her best to prevent me getting blown away too."

"She talks a great deal of nonsense!" said Mrs. Vere. "But if you are an old friend you will know that."

"Oh, but he has not had many opportunities of finding it out. He has been abroad for two years, on some dangerous expedition in the cause of science. He was not to come home for another year—that is his home, which has been shut up so long, down in the valley—only he grew ill, and they made him come home, and he is to stay here to rest. Was not it funny, my seeing him? I was just looking over the hedge, into the lane, wishing for a visitor, and I saw him coming up it. He almost frightened me at first. I thought it was his ghost." They were walking side by side towards the gateway again. "He only arrived yesterday, and then quite unexpectedly. Did not it look very dismal when you arrived, with the windows all closed, with the rooms all empty, and no one waiting to greet you on the doorstep?"

"No; it was what I knew would be," answered the man quietly.

Was it the shadow of one of the blossom-laden branches, which fell across the girl's uplifted face, or was it a sudden darkening of the laughing eyes? Whatever it was, it had vanished as they stepped into the sunlight again.



"It is such a great satisfaction to know what must be, must be! But for this knowledge of the inevitable, we might grow so bitter and rebellious," she went on again in the same light voice.

Mrs. Vere, who never pretended to attempt to understand Mildred in any one of her moods, did not trouble to try to find out anything beneath the surface of her speeches. But the man, not being accustomed to her—not being, in fact, much accustomed to any woman, looked down at her a little puzzled. Was she in jest or in earnest?

Apparently she did not see the grave enquiry of his eyes. She had already fluttered off to another subject, one totally different, it seemed, in the way she had—a way which often puzzled people, who could not always make out the connection between her last speech and the next.

"Does the old house look the same to you?" she asked, as they reached the lawn again, and faced the Hall. "It does to me—always the same, but then, I never go away for long. Not for two years. And do you remember the dreadful story attached to it? I will take you to look at the hall-steps again. The stains are still there. What is the legend? That they will remain till someone who is nearest and dearest to the owner of the house shall be struck down in the same way on the steps, and his blood is to wash out the stains of the other. It's a horrible story, isn't it?"

The bright face turned white, and a shudder shook the girl from head to foot.

"Why do you talk about such ghastly things!" exclaimed Mrs. Vere in quick reprimand, as she caught sight of the pale face. "It is so silly of you. Those stupid old stories make me lose all patience. There is no sooner a picturesque, comfortable old house, than people go and tack on some horror to it."

"But you don't believe such stories, Miss Rathborne?" asked Galbraith, looking with intense surprise, not unmingled with extreme curiosity, at the girl. It seemed as if he saw, for the first time, a new kind of study opening out before him.

"Of course I don't," said Miss Rathborne, recovering herself, while a sudden hot flush, born probably of vexation at her own foolishness, swept over her face from brow to chin, as she met those grave,

enquiring eyes. "Only it is rather interesting, though it is—morbid. Is not that the word? But then, I am afraid my mind is not very evenly balanced. I can't look at everything in the light of an abstract science, as you do. Oh!"

They had come to the gravel-path leading past the morning-room.

A man stood in the open French-window. He had been watching them advance. As Mildred's speech broke off in a low startled exclamation, he stepped out to meet them.

It was Frederick Seymour.

"It is not a visitor this time," said Mildred, looking at him, an indescribable expression on her face, as he shook hands with Mrs. Vere. "We could not possibly have two on one day, in such a place as this. How did you manage to tear yourself away from town at this time?" holding out her hand. "He has frightened us, has not he, Mrs. Vere?"

Mrs. Vere was bound to make some sort of reply, and, the look on her face expressing an amount of disapproval her good-breeding rarely allowed to appear on the surface, she entered the room.

"You didn't come back, so I thought you must be finding the sun getting up behind the trees so interesting a spectacle that I didn't see why I shouldn't have a look at him too."

"The spectacle is free to all!" she said, with an odd little laugh, and a comprehensive gesture towards the horizon at the back of them. "Now come in, and I will give you both some tea."

The two men fell back to let her pass through the window. As they did so they took a quick look at each other—an instinctive one, apparently, on the part of Galbraith, for he had no particular reason for interesting himself in Seymour.

But as he looked, a startled expression came into his eyes, changing swiftly into one of recognition, almost contemptuous in its disapproval and indignation.

The other man met the look with one of the blankest indifference, without the faintest touch of recognition. But then he had had an advantage. He had seen Galbraith first as he came up the path with Mildred. If he had not wished to renew the acquaintance, he had had time to make up his mind.

Turning carelessly on his heel, he, too, entered the room, while Galbraith, his face grown grave to sternness, followed without a word.

## CHAPTER III.

GALBRAITH did not stay very long.

He waited for the tea, which Mildred poured out for him, sitting talking to Mrs. Vere, but with his eyes straying every now and then to the tea-table, where sat Mildred, Seymour by her side.

Apparently they were quite satisfied with their own society, and did not join much in the conversation of the other two.

After each glance, Galbraith's eyes grew darker and more troubled. He rose to leave at last.

Mildred came forward to speak to him.

"You are going so soon!" she asked.

"We are sorry. You can't think how dull we have been finding it."

"I wonder how you managed to tear yourself away from the London gaieties," he answered, taking the hand she held out to him. "Was anything the matter with you?"

There was a faint anxiety in his eyes as they rested in a searching way on her face.

She drew her hand quickly away.

"No. What could be the matter? I could eat, and sleep, and laugh. Only I wanted to come to the country. What was it I wanted to come for, Mr. Seymour?"

But he had moved to the farther end of the room, where he was carelessly turning over a book of engravings.

"Oh yes; I think I know. Indeed, I am quite sure I know now. It was to wait for the voice of the great god Pan. That is rather a poetical way of putting it. Perhaps you would call it seeing the trees, and the grass, and the flowers, and having time to think, but I don't think you would be right. Do you know that sometimes men of science are wrong? In such simple little things, too! But perhaps that is just it. They are too simple for them. Now, I mustn't bother you any longer. You will come and see us when you have time, won't you? We shall be here for just a little longer."

Galbraith said something in reply, and then, shaking hands with Mrs. Vere, left the room, returning Seymour's careless nod to him with a grave bow as he passed him on his way to the French-window.

He left the room that way apparently as a matter of course, as if he had been accustomed to this more unceremonious manner of exit.

And as Mildred watched him, a faint

light stole into her eyes, as if the simple fact of his doing so pleased her.

"He has not forgotten," she said. "I am glad he has not forgotten. He used to be here a great deal when my father was alive."

She turned to Seymour, who, as the other man left, had come forward.

Something in the dark, handsome eyes, as they, too, followed the retreating figure of Galbraith, startled Mildred, intensely sensitive to all impressions as she was. The pleased flush faded from her face.

"Do you know him?" she asked quickly.

"And are you two enemies?"

Seymour, looking after Galbraith in that strange intent fashion, did not notice the eyes of the girl resting on him. The quick question seemed to disconcert him for a second. He turned his back upon the light falling through the window.

"No," he said; "I was only wondering in what class of reptiles he had placed me. Is not he the great man of science of to-day?"

"And the apostle of the future, when there will be no more drones like you and me," said Mildred with tragic mockery.

Quick as she was, she had not noticed the slight pause before the word "no." And Seymour's face being turned from the light, prevented her seeing the dull red flush which darkened its skin.

He had told many lies to women in his life, but it was the first one he had ever told her.

## CHAPTER IV.

SEYMOUR had taken up his quarters at one of the small inns of the neighbouring town. It was about two miles from Oakroyd Hall, and scarcely a day passed without his making his way out to it.

Not that he seemed to have any purpose in the length of his stay at the dull little country town. He just seemed to linger on from day to day as the fancy seized him, not troubling himself in any way about his numerous engagements in town. He certainly showed no interest in any of his surroundings, and as certainly displayed no symptoms of being bored. Once when Mrs. Vere asked him rather sharply what he was doing in such a dead-and-alive old place, he answered that he was "drifting." An answer which puzzled her and made her uneasy.

A week went by, and Mrs. Vere grew still more uneasy. Some indefinable change in the girl herself deepened it. She

seemed to grow paler and thinner, but it was not that which troubled and puzzled Mrs. Vere. It was a curious look, which would flash at times into her eyes—a look of pain, which had, Mrs. Vere could have declared, a curious suggestion of fear and of almost despair.

As the days went on, Mrs. Vere began to long for someone to whom she could turn for advice. But there was no one. Mildred had no near relations, no friends nearer than herself, and if she could not gain the girl's confidence, no one else could. Once a wild thought had come to her of Myles Galbraith.

She had found out that, though a good many years younger, he had been a great friend of Mildred's father, and that most of the time he could spare, when staying at his own home in the valley, was spent at Oakroyd Hall.

They had been staunch friends from the days when Galbraith, only an enthusiastic young student, would run down from town, and give himself a brief rest among the country pleasures, to which Rathborne, hating town-life, always clung. As the years went on, and Galbraith stepped gradually forward into the front rank of men of science, the friendship only deepened.

Rathborne married, but his wife died early, and he was left with only this one little girl, who grew up in this quiet country home, seeing scarcely anyone but her father and Myles Galbraith. Three years ago her father died, and at the same time an aunt left her an enormous fortune. After that her life quite changed. After her mourning was over, she was taken possession of by friends, a chaperon found for her, she was brought up to London, presented, and became the brilliant social success she was.

Naturally such a life as she had been leading would have removed her far enough from the world in which Galbraith lived, even if his two years' absence on a scientific expedition had not separated them completely. Mildred had told her how little notice, beyond that of the tender kindness of a man to a helpless child, he had ever taken of her even in the old days. "Even papa used to laugh and say that if I had been a beetle, or a geological specimen, he would have made him my guardian when he should die; but not being either, he thought it best to choose someone else, who would not find the matter so difficult or so uninteresting." And now, living

only for science, keeping up scarcely one link with the world outside, was it likely he could be expected to help in such a difficult matter as this?

It showed how little interest he took in her, that since that afternoon, a whole week ago now, he had never been up to the Hall, though he was still at his house in the valley.

Matters were in this unsatisfactory state when, one evening, Mildred stood on the steps of the hall-door, talking to Seymour and Mrs. Vere. Galbraith, passing the lodge-gates, caught sight of them. Something in Seymour's attitude, as he bent his head to speak to her, standing close by her side, struck him. A low exclamation broke from him, and the far-off, abstracted look vanished from his eyes.

"It is he! I am certain, though for some reason he pretends not to recognise me. Can it be that he means anything here? It would be too terrible. To be bound for life to a man such as that! And Rathborne——" At the thought of the man who, to the day of his death, had been such a faithful friend to him, Galbraith's face grew heavy and troubled.

"His child! But what can I do? I don't understand any of these things. She would only resent my interference. Such a spoilt, petted child as she is! Yet, perhaps, her fashionable life has not quite changed her. She was sweet and true. Hearts cannot change so completely—not even in such a world as she has lived in for the last two years. But what can I do? I am nothing to her." He had ridden to the end of the lane as he thought, the powerful face, with its lines of thought and intellectual toil, growing troubled and harassed. "I must do something!" he said, reining up abruptly his horse, and turning back, "for the sake of the old friendship—for her sake!"

He dismounted, and asked a little boy, who came running out of the lodge, to hold his horse, and then he went up the drive to the house. The little group was still standing on the low, broad steps of stone which led up to the hall-door. It was these steps which had given rise to the legend of the Hall. Many years ago, a young man had entered its door as a friend of the then owner. He had gone in all confidence, believing in the faith of the man who had invited him. He had partaken of his hospitality, and as the evening wore on, he and some other guests present had sat down, as was the fashion in those days, to

gamble. A quarrel; fierce words; a drawing of swords; and the guest, who had entered a few hours before, was carried out of the hall-door wounded to death. But the story went that it had not even the fairness of a drunken brawl; that it had been an affair of premeditated vengeance. That the young man had incurred the anger of his vindictive host, who, violating all laws of honour and sacred covenants of hospitality, had planned and carried out the atrocious murder. In support of this were shown strange stains and splashes—here trickling in what appeared winding streams, there lying in pools of a dull, red hue—on the stone steps; and from them rose the legend that, until some other blood should wipe out the blackness and treachery that stained the home of the Rathbornes, those ominous stains would remain.

Curiously enough, as Galbraith went up the drive, Mildred, in spite of Mrs. Vere's indignant remonstrance, was pointing out the marks and telling the legend to Seymour.

"Really, Mildred, one would say the story had some morbid attraction for you! Oh, here is Mr. Galbraith! I shall ask him to forbid you, as an old friend, to talk such rubbish!"

Mrs. Vere turned quickly and appealed to him as he came up. Mildred held out her hand silently, but she smiled a pleasant greeting to him, though it seemed, even to his usually unobservant eyes, that her face had grown paler since he last saw it.

Then he looked keenly at Seymour, who met the look with the same cool indifference, making some careless movement of recognition, then turned away again, apparently to inspect once more the traces of the ghastly story.

Galbraith's face grew suddenly dark with anger and contempt.

"We have met before, I think, Mr. Seymour, though you have apparently forgotten so unimportant an event," he said with a curious intonation.

Seymour looked up again.

"I beg your pardon. One sees so many strange faces, knocking about the world as I do, that one is apt to forget," he said with careless courtesy, though it seemed as if the lines about his eyes deepened a little, and he put up his hand as if the sun's setting rays caught them. "One forgets."

"Yes—sometimes."

Mildred looked quickly from one man

to the other. Mrs. Vere gazed steadily before her.

A sudden feeling of unutterable constraint seemed to have fallen upon them all. Seymour's face was the only one which betrayed no consciousness of it, as he stood carelessly playing with a spray of the rose-tree growing up the house.

Mrs. Vere broke the short silence. A sudden impulse seized her.

"I don't see why we should stand here upon these uncomfortable steps," she said, turning to Galbraith. "Let us go over to that seat under the elms. We can leave these two to the contemplation of those dismal marks."

For one second Galbraith hesitated, then followed her.

Mildred stood quite still, watching them as they crossed the lawn. Seymour let the spray fall, and watched her. As he looked, his face turned suddenly white, and an exclamation, like a smothered imprecation, broke from his lips. She did not hear it. She was still watching.

"Miss Rathborne," he spoke gently, but his voice was not so clear as usual, "what do you see—the great god Pan?"

She turned sharply to him, his voice bringing her back to the consciousness of his presence. For one second she gazed at him, a bewildered, startled look in her eyes, in which lingered still the reflection of a bitter pain, a hopeless longing.

But two years' training in the world of fashionable stoicism and self-control were not lost now. She laughed softly, though her lips were not quite steady.

"Yes," she said. "But he is disappointing—as most things are. I should have stayed in London. The dream of what might be was better than the reality of what is."

An indescribable look, dark with infinite regret and pain, swept over his face. Then he came nearer.

"But you did not stay in London. You came here, and—I, too, had to follow. I had a message to—"

"Don't! Don't say anything that will hurt yourself—or me—anything we should always be sorry for afterwards."

She was facing him; her face was no longer pale, but flushed with painful excitement, her eyes brilliant yet pleading.

"I shall not," he answered, still speaking with the same studied quietness. "It is something that I must say now, though I have kept it back from the first day I knew you. I have fought against it, rebelled

against it; you must know how much, for you are a woman, and can read our hearts whether we will or not. I tell you that I would not give in to this thing, that tormented me, and yet gave me the truest delight I had ever felt in all my days. I had tired of everything. The object no sooner won was worthless; I had tried everything, and only came back to the point that there was nothing worth the grieving over or rejoicing over. Now, I know what a fool I have been."

"Why are you telling me all this?"

"Because I wish you to understand that I love you! I love you!" He had broken out from his forced calm now, and drawn closer to her. "For two whole years! Have you nothing to say to me now?"

"Nothing. Only that I guessed—I knew this all along, and—I let you go on. I wronged you—I let you believe things which give you the right to speak like this now! But you knew me—you knew me as a flirt—heartless, frivolous——"

"Yes," he interrupted her, smiling slightly, his face pale; "I knew you as you were. But I went into it with my eyes open. I knew what I risked. We both knew that, and if we played with sharp swords, we knew they were sharp, and it is our own fault if we cut our fingers."

"Ah, stop! Don't speak any more like this! I have been heartless, I know; I have been wicked—cruel, if you will; but I was suffering, too! I was trying an experiment—not on you, but on myself. And the experiment has failed, and I am sadder at heart than ever, and I have made you suffer, too—and I cannot explain. I can only ask you to forgive me. And—and—— No; it is all of no use!"

She was crying, and the sight of her tears seemed to hurt him, for he turned away.

"You do not know!" she cried; "you do not know! If you did, you would be sorry for me, as I am for you."

Bad as he had been; unprincipled as he still was, where his pleasures or his desires were involved; selfish as a life spent wholly for self could make him; he yet had chivalry enough left in him to respect the secret he had surprised, which she had so unwittingly betrayed, and which she still believed her own.

The summer dusk was stealing up over the garden, already the shadows lurking in the shrubs and tall clusters of trees had spread over the lawns and paths. Mrs. Vere and Galbraith, who had been

talking earnestly beneath the group of elms, were silent now as they came slowly towards the two standing on the stone steps.

The last lights of the day that was done, seemed to have gathered themselves up and concentrated themselves upon the dark-stained stones. The thick bushes of some scented flowering-shrub growing close up to the side of the house on the left, made this lingering effort of the dying day still clearer, and showed more plainly Mildred and Seymour, as they stood a little apart from each other.

Mrs. Vere and Galbraith looked up at Mildred as they drew near. Then a curious expression, a kind of dawning light, something like the awakening consciousness which steals into a sleeper's face as he passes slowly from dreams to realities—an expression which was not glad, nor sorry, but rather vaguely troubled and bewildered, came into Galbraith's eyes, and he turned his face away towards the dark shrubbery, as if the light lingering on the steps dazzled him.

"Good Heavens!" A low cry of uncontrollable horror, and the next second he had dashed past Mrs. Vere, and flung himself between Seymour and the shrubbery.

A flash of light from the thick leaves, a quick, sharp report, and Galbraith reeled and fell at the feet of the two standing there.

There was a cry of infinite terror from the two women, an oath from Seymour, as they sprang to the help of Galbraith, while the servants, attracted by the pistol-shot and the screams, came hurrying out of the house.

Then Mildred fell back, shuddering from head to foot, her face white as death, her lips strained and blue. Her strength had failed her. She could do nothing, while from where Galbraith lay stole out a dark stream, spreading slowly over the fatal steps. The prophecy of her house had been fulfilled before her eyes. With an uncontrollable gesture of horror she flung up her hands before her face to shut out, if possible, sight and sound.

Seymour, giving quick, low words of command to the excited, bewildered servants, saw the gesture. If he had not understood before, he did now. He bent down to assist Galbraith. Some strange sense of his presence seemed to pierce the clouds of unconsciousness which held Galbraith senseless. He stirred, then opened his eyes, and met those of

Seymour. His lips moved, and Seymour bent down.

"Stay—before you help me. I shall tell her the story."

A slight smile flickered across Seymour's pale lips.

"As you will," he said after an imperceptible pause; "yet it may not matter so much as you think."

But Galbraith did not hear the low voice, for he had fainted again.

#### CHAPTER V.

BUT the story was not told by Galbraith, after all. He lay senseless in one of the rooms of Oakroyd Hall, while the story became public property. A nine days' scandal, which shocked, and interested, and moved with an excited curiosity the world of fashion assembled in town, for one of the chief actors in the drama was a member of that world. A terrible story enough. A young wife, foolish and weak, a husband betrayed; and the man who was the author of all the treachery and dishonour was Seymour.

It had all happened five years before, in France. For the sake of the husband's rank, it had been hushed up as well as it could be.

But the husband—old and an invalid—already harassed and nearly ruined by his wife's frivolities and extravagances, could not bear this last blow. He went out of his mind, and for the last five years had been kept under constraint in his own home in Brittany, while his madness, forgetting all else, never forgot for one moment the desire of vengeance. For five years he waited patiently, then one day he succeeded in eluding his attendants. With the cunning of a madman, and with a purpose which never swerved, he tracked Seymour to England, and found him at last at Oakroyd Hall. He was captured, and was quiet enough then. He was satisfied that he had avenged his honour, his poor sick brain not understanding that Seymour had been saved by the devotion of Galbraith.

After his insanity was proved, he was taken back to France, where he died a week or two later. Seymour, too, after it was all over, left the country for an indefinite time, till the fashionable mind should veer back again to the important fact that he was the heir to a dukedom. The woman was dead, and her memory was no more. Nothing more than the

whisper breathed about such men as he, "There was a story once——"

Galbraith, who happened to be in Brittany at the time, staying with some neighbours of the unfortunate husband, knew the story, and it was the thought of it that made the idea of a girl like Mildred marrying such a man abhorrent to him. Not belonging himself to the fashionable world, he could not see that honour, faith, and purity weighed light in the balance against a ducal coronet.

And Mildred—as she, too, having learned the story, thought over it during the long summer days, when Myles Galbraith lay between life and death under her roof—was filled with shame and loathing at the remembrance of the experiment she had tried on herself, with that man for the means, and ambition for the end; of how she had tried to forget all that was best in herself, by striving to force herself to care for another whom she knew in her heart she could never look up to nor respect.

For she knew that all that was best in her had gone out with her heart when she gave it, still but a child in her father's house, to Myles Galbraith. As she looked back she acknowledged that it was that love, hopeless, despairing as it had been, which had kept her life from becoming wholly foolish, heartless, frivolous. Better to have loved a hopeless love like this, than have been contented to become a Duchess and the wife of such a man as Frederick Seymour. Yet it had been the last despairing effort to avoid this fate which had made her leave the town to seek strength in the country.

Galbraith was not of their world, not of their thoughts, nor of their deeds. Life with him was a beautiful reality—true, earnest, ever striving after an ideal which only rose higher the nearer he drew to it. Ah, and she could have dreamt even for one single moment that he could look upon her! In those days, when she sat waiting through the long, weary hours—in the nights when she could not sleep for the pain of not knowing whether the next day was to bring life or death, she grew very humble, very pitiful, very sorry even for the other man wandering over the face of the earth; for surely, if he had had such a love to guide and influence his life, even all unwittingly as this one had done hers, he could not have failed so terribly.

But a day came at last—a perfect day,

full of sunshine, and scents of roses, when the shadows passed away from her house.

Myles Galbraith was saved! Then came long days of convalescence, when, too weak yet to be moved, he was still forced to stay on at Oakroyd Hall. Days when Mildred could tend on him, and wait on him, amusing him, reading to him, playing to him. All the coquetries with which she had bewildered and fascinated her other world were gone from her, leaving her only frank, and sweet, and natural, till Mrs. Vere, much perplexed in her mind with all that had gone before, and all that was still going on, could only shake her head very doubtfully, bewildered by the change, and dimly beginning to comprehend.

It was Sunday. A beautiful morning in July. When Mildred and Mrs. Vere came in from church, Mrs. Vere went indoors to divest herself of her bonnet, but Mildred made her way to the favourite seat of Galbraith, now able to be out of doors.

From beneath the shade of the elms he could watch her as she came across the sunlit turf, her dainty gown a marvel of cream laces and soft muslin, while from the lace-frilled parasol shading her face, to the little French shoes on her feet, she bore the impress of the rich world of fashion to which she belonged. Her whole toilette was simple, but even to his inexperienced eyes, its simplicity was but a disguise of extreme costliness. As he watched her coming over the velvet of the turf, with the sunlight falling all around her, with scarlet masses of blossom making brilliant gleams of colour in the background, his face, pale and thin from the fierce fight with death, grew graver and paler still.

But she did not seem to notice that he had been watching her as she came up, and after the conventional good-morning—for she had not seen him before that day—she moved a few steps from him, and stood looking out, too, on the scene.

Then he noticed that the pretty face had grown much paler, and that a pathetic, wistful look had stolen into the lines of the mouth. In some way, the look and the delicacy seemed to contradict all the fashion and costliness of her dress. They made him forget that she was the brilliant beauty. He only remembered that she was the girl who had been very pitiful and gentle to him in his illness.

"I am afraid that I have been a dreadful burden to you," he said abruptly.

Her face was suddenly dyed a hot crimson, but she turned gently to him.

"No," she said. "How can you think such a thing? You who so nobly risked your life to save another man's!"

He made a restless movement with his hands, then he looked earnestly at her.

"I went willingly to help him, as I would have done to any man, but"—the pale quiet of his face was troubled a little, but he went on steadily—"do you know, as I ran up, the story you told me of those steps came suddenly back to me, and it reminded me of you. I was afraid for you as well. I thought that perhaps the legend might be fulfilled, and though I would have desired for you, for your father's sake, that he should be nothing to you, yet I could not have stood by and seen him hurt. His life became more sacred to me for your sake."

"You thought of me, too!" she echoed with a faint smile. "It was good of you."

So he, too, thought that Frederick Seymour was her "nearest and dearest." As if all that had gone before had not been hard enough!

"But I was mistaken!" he asked more earnestly. "For your own sake and happiness, you can say there was nothing between you and him? You will not think me impertinent; I was a friend of your father's, and for him—"

"There is nothing between us," she said softly, looking away again, though her face seemed to have grown too still and pale to flush ever again.

He drew in his breath quickly—whether in a sigh of relief, or from another feeling nearer pain, he did not know. Then a silence fell between them.

The garden was full of the sunny radiance; the scents of flowers and earth went up to the heavens, blue and cloudless above them. There was a lazy twitter from the birds in the trees and bushes, and the rustle of the leaves as their wings fluttered through the branches. And over all, the strange peace which seems to hush into rest the country on the Sabbath day.

It seemed as if this peace affected her whose heart had been hot, and restless, and aching for so long. A tender light fell on her tired face, and she turned to him, meeting his eyes, which had been watching her.

"Is not the country beautiful on Sun-

day? Do you know what it reminds me of? It is as if a hand had been laid on the brow of the earth, and a voice had said: 'Hush, be still—for this one day at least!'"

As he met the dreamy gaze of her eyes, a look of bewildered amazement, of intense gladness, flashed into his. Even yet, he had not known her to be so in sympathy with earth's great voices.

She understood what his face said.

"Oh," she cried, catching her breath, as if wounded to the quick, "don't you remember how Echo caught up and repeated the great words of the god Nature? In a foolish, silly way, if you will; but there must have been some power in her to be able to gather up the sounds and repeat them, even in that weak way. Don't you think it may be even so with us—poor fluttering butterflies of fashion? Do you think there is never anything beneath the surface of the water flickering in the sunshine? No swift currents, nor deep eddies?" All the quiet had gone now. She was speaking in quick, passionate tones, the colour coming and going in her face, her eyes bright with pain and defiance.

He had misunderstood her so long. Well, he should not do so any longer. He should be compelled to see beneath the surface of her society-life for once. Then she would put him from her for always. With a gesture of infinite pain and reproach she turned away. But Myles Galbraith, whose face had grown very white as she spoke, into whose eyes had come a strange new light—a light which was yet more than half pain, stepped in front of her, and barred her passage.

"Will you stay for just one little moment?" he said, the quiet voice unsteady and strained. "You have been so good to me already, you have done so much for me during these past weeks, and yet I am going to ask you just one thing more. Just one moment in which I can explain—a moment in which I must give you pain; for I know you will be sorry for me; more than I am for myself. For, at least——"

With a swift gesture of his hand, as if putting something from him, he broke off abruptly, and then went on again in the same strained voice:

"But I cannot bear you to think that I should misjudge you. At first I did. You were so different to anything that I had ever known, that I could not be expected to

understand anything so wonderful—so beautiful. But since I have been here—since I have seen you, day by day—since my eyes have grown accustomed to the brightness of your presence, and I can see beneath the brilliance, I have learned only too well what you are. Ah, there! I have wounded you, I see. I know that it must be so. Yet I could not bear you to misjudge me. Ah, don't look at me like that! Do you think that I did not know the folly of it all? I, who am nearly twenty years older than yourself—grave and quiet enough with work, and fighting life's hardest battle, to be even many years older!"

He had steadied the broken pain of his voice, and was even smiling, though his lips were as white as the gown she wore.

Love had been a long time coming into his life, but now that it had come, it had come with such a power and passion that to his dying day he would never be able to repel it. But he did not tell her this, only, as she still looked away, silent, his face contracted with sharp pain.

"Will you ever forgive me for hurting you like this?" he asked gently. "I had no right to wound you. It was wicked of me—unutterably selfish; but you will believe that I did not expect anything?"

Then she turned quickly to him, stepping back a pace or two to put more distance between them, her face flushing and paling, but her eyes bright and steady.

"The legend of my house has been fulfilled," she said in a low tone; "and I am glad. And—and—oh, you won't see——"

"What do you mean? Oh, Miss Rathborne, what is it?" he cried hoarsely, stepping quickly to her side. "Don't play with me. What do you mean?"

"I don't know—I don't know if you don't. I can't tell you anything more. You must find out for yourself," she cried with quivering lips, her voice broken with tears, yet with such a great light of gladness in her eyes that he could not help understanding.

The next second the dainty parasol lay all unheeded on the green turf, as her two hands were clasped in his, and she was drawn back into the friendly shade of the elms.

"Oh, Mildred!" he said, when at last he could speak, and could put her from him a little to look down into her face, "how was I to understand when the marks still remained on the steps? You told me



the story all wrong;" and he laughed softly, drawing her closer again.

"If they are still there, at least I shall never see them," she said, flushing hotly, and trying to release herself. "For me, at least, that legend is fulfilled."

Even then his happiness was too perfect for him to be able quite to understand.

"It is all so wonderful!" he said, "so strange! Are you sure you are not making some mistake? My life is so different to yours. Are you sure that I am not too old—too grave? Are you not afraid that my daily work, which must come into my life, may not——"

"Oh, don't you see yet?" she cried, interrupting, and this time she came to him herself, and laid her hands in his. "Don't you see that your work can never come between me and you? Don't you see that you have to teach me all things, to tell me all that the great world tells you? Don't you know that you are the great god Pan, and that I am your 'Echo'?"

And then, at last, he fully understood.

## "IN THE SWEET O' THE YEAR."

### CHAPTER I.

"If you marry her, I tell you plainly I will cut you off with a shilling."

"Aunt Chris, if you have a spare shilling knocking about, will you mind handing it over at once? I'm rather hard-up just now, and I'll promise you safe enough to earn it in the way you mention!"

"You may make light of my words now, Reginald; the time will come when you will remember them in shame and sorrow;" and the speaker, a tall, slender lady, somewhere on the wrong side of sixty, rose from her chair and swept out of the room.

There came a rustling of skirts from another corner, and a somewhat high-pitched voice echoed pathetically, "Yes, the time will come, Reginald, when in shame and sorrow you will think of Aunt Chris's warning;" and then a short, stout lady, also on the wrong side of sixty, swept out of the room after the first speaker.

The young man addressed as Reginald was a good-looking young fellow, somewhere about five or six and twenty. He was fair and stalwart, with kindly grey eyes, and a thick moustache.

He shrugged his shoulders, and gave a low whistle as the door closed.

"Well done, Aunt Ju! stick to your calling; it's an easy one!" he said half to himself; and then he went to the window, threw it open, and leaned out.

This window framed as pretty a picture of English landscape as one would wish to see on a bright May morning. A ridge of green hills, with a mid-way belt of hop-gardens and nut-plantations; in the near distance an old-fashioned orchard, now in its full luxuriance of apple and plum blossom; immediately under the windows a stretch of equally old-fashioned flower-garden, with all sorts of shy spring blooms peeping out from amid the young foliage. The air seemed full of sunlight, of vibrating bird-notes, of half-awakened flower-scents. "Come, let us all be young together," all creation seemed to be saying in glad unison; "let us do just exactly that which we most delight in;" and Reginald, feeling amazingly in accord with creation at that moment, shut the window, and made his way straight to the stables to give orders for the saddling of his mare, saying to himself as he went along: "Clare is safe to be in this morning, after what I said to her last night. Aunt Chris won't have settled down into an equable frame of mind till dinner at the earliest; Aunt Ju ditto, of course; so I may as well have a delicious four or five hours right off at the Dyke Farm, making hay while the sun shines."

As he entered the stables, he met one of the grooms riding out. He stopped a moment to interrogate the man as to his destination.

"I'm going to Mr. Belt's, sir, to tell him mistress wishes particularly to see him this afternoon," answered the man.

Now Mr. Josiah Belt, resident in the market town of Harrow-Dene, some four miles distant, had been lawyer and family adviser to Aunt Chris and Aunt Ju ever since they had held the reins at the old Manor House, now some twenty-five or thirty years.

Reginald knew in a moment what it all meant. He took a decidedly lofty, not to say defiant, tone.

"I'll relieve you of your mission, Jeffreys," he said. "Tell your mistress I shall be riding through Harrow-Dene this morning on my way to Dyke Farm, and will leave a message as I go for Mr. Belt to come up immediately."

Now this is the situation of affairs at the old Manor House, Harrow-Dene. Here

are two maiden ladies, with a tolerably large fortune and an intolerably large sense of personal and family dignity, bent on arranging a suitable matrimonial alliance for their heir and only nephew, Reginald Dalton, Captain in Her Majesty's One Hundred and Tenth Regiment. And here is the nephew bent on rejecting the afore-said suitable matrimonial alliance, on ignoring alike personal and family dignity, by marrying a girl with large, brown, caressing eyes, and soft, pleading voice, who chances to be staying on a visit at a neighbouring farmhouse.

## CHAPTER II.

"THREE courses are open to you, madam," began Mr. Belt.

"Be exact, Mr. Belt," interrupted Aunt Chris. "A lawyer is nothing if not exact. One of three courses is open to me, I suppose you mean!"

"I stand corrected, madam," said Mr. Belt with a little bow. "One of three courses is open to you. Course number one is to allow things to remain on precisely their present footing, in which case Captain Dalton will succeed to the whole of your property, and no doubt will marry when he sees fit, and whom he sees fit. Course number two is to cut him out of your will with or without the proverbial shilling; in which case, love in a cottage, with nothing to pay the rent, must be his portion. Course number three is to reason him out of his folly, and bring him back to a sense of his duty to you, and to his position in the county."

"Reason him out of his folly!" repeated Aunt Chris incisively. "Have I not spent whole mornings, afternoons, evenings, in trying to do so—ever since, about a fortnight ago, he had the audacity to tell me he had not the slightest intention of marrying Miss Burnside, if I asked her to stay here a hundred times over?"

"It was a thousand pities Miss Burnside's visit had to be deferred," said the lawyer musingly. "If he had found her here when he arrived on leave, things might have turned out otherwise. A young fellow left for three weeks in the country at this time of year is bound to find occupation for himself of some sort—"

"A nice occupation he has found—making love to a farmer's cousin!" interjected Aunt Chris angrily.

"You see," the lawyer went on, "there

was no shooting, no hunting, no anything but riding about the green lanes to be done. A young fellow of five or six and twenty can't be supposed to pick buttercups and daisies all day long like the children. Depend upon it, it is the time of year that will have to be answerable for the upset of your plans quite as much as Miss Burnside's failure to keep her engagement."

Aunt Chris grew more and more irritable.

"I don't see what we shall gain by discussing what has brought about this miserable state of affairs; the thing is, what can we do—what is there to be done to prevent my nephew making himself and us utterly ridiculous in the county?"

"Yes," chimed in Aunt Ju pathetically; "the thing is, what is to be done to prevent him making us all ridiculous in the county!"

These elderly ladies, sisters though they were, possessed little in common save their family name, and the pride with which they regarded its possession. In temperament one was the antithesis of the other. Aunt Chris, or Christabel, owned to a domineering temper, a strong will, a good head for business. Aunt Ju, or Juliet, was yielding and good-natured to the last degree, and as utterly incapable of the first four rules of arithmetic as she was of having a will of her own, or of seeing matters in any light save that in which her elder sister's stronger spectacles chose to view them.

Mr. Belt took up his parable once more.

"As I said before," he began, "it's a thousand pities Miss Burnside did not keep her engagement."

"Yes, we heard you say it before," interrupted Aunt Chris irritably; "and we don't in the least see how it helps us out of our difficulties. It seems to me the only thing now is to act with great decision."

"Do not act with—with—ah, pardon me—rashness, dear madam," said Mr. Belt imploringly. "In matters of difficulty the great thing always is to gain time."

To say truth, Captain Dalton was a prime favourite with the old lawyer, and the project of "cutting him off with a shilling" did not approve itself to his mind.

"Well?"

"It is fresh in my memory how a mésalliance was prevented the other day by the discretion of the parents of the hot-headed suitor. Instead of opposing his wishes,

they appeared to favour them, invited the young lady to their house——"

"Good gracious! You don't expect me to do that?"

"Allow me to finish. They set rank and breeding beside her plebeian attractions, and tacitly invited the young man to strike the balance between them. This he did eventually in favour of rank and breeding."

"Ah, I see!" and Aunt Chris drew a long breath. "There may be something in what you say, Mr. Belt; I'll think it over. I have never in my life had the pleasure of seeing Miss Burnside, although she is the daughter of my oldest friend, Colonel Burnside. She was sent to Germany to be educated when her mother died, you know. But her lineage, her breeding, are irreproachable, and I haven't the slightest doubt but what her attractions are of a distinctly aristocratic order."

"Her mother was a Douglas, you know, of Glen-Douglas Castle, Ayrshire," put in Aunt Ju, turning to Mr. Belt. "There never yet was a Douglas, of Glen-Douglas, without an aquiline nose and a small ear."

"And high cheek-bones and red hair," the lawyer felt inclined to add, but checked himself, feeling only too delighted that his plan had taken with the ladies. "Exactly—exactly," he said aloud; "one and all their attractions are of a decidedly high-bred type. Now, have you any idea, madam, what the young lady staying at Dyke Farm is like in manners and appearance?"

"Not the remotest. We have not encouraged Reginald to talk about her, or, no doubt, he would have raved by the hour over her plebeian graces."

"What is her father?"

"'Something in London,' Reginald says. I've always noticed that these second-rate girls who come to stay at farmhouses have fathers who are 'something in London.' It's a polite way of putting the shop under a bushel, I suppose."

"Most likely." Then, after a moment's pause, he added: "I suppose, at your earliest convenience, you will call at the Dyke Farm and invite the young lady up to the house?"

He was evidently anxious that his little project should be put en train at once, while Aunt Chris was in the humour for it.

"I shall do nothing of the sort. With persons of that class ceremony is unnecessary. Reginald can convey a message of invitation from me. There is little fear of it not being accepted."

"Exactly—quite so," assented Mr. Belt;

"but you'll excuse my suggesting—ah—that—that in a little plan like ours, success depends entirely upon the manner in which it is carried out. Now, if the young lady is asked on a week or ten days' invitation, and—and—in any way imagines herself to be—to be—ah, snubbed—and Captain Dalton should be led into a sort of championship of her, the whole thing would be an utter failure from beginning to end."

"Mr. Belt, I was not born yesterday," said Aunt Chris, holding her head very high.

And she said it with such asperity that Mr. Belt, feeling himself completely extinguished, forthwith took his hat and departed.

Later on in the day, however, after the two ladies had well discussed every detail of Mr. Belt's scheme, Aunt Chris paid her tribute to the lawyer's zeal and sagacity.

"I don't believe there's another man in England who would have suggested such a thoroughly reasonable, sensible plan of action," she said. "Mr. Belt is one of a thousand."

Captain Dalton, coming in at that moment, heard her concluding words. He was very muddled from his long ride, and also very much out of temper that his ride had been for nothing, since he had not succeeded in finding Miss Clare Gunter at home at the Dyke Farm.

"So old Belt turned up all right?" he said, rolling over Aunt Ju's poodle with his foot, and rubbing all its shaggy hair the wrong way. "I wish you had asked him to spend the day with you. I particularly wanted to see him."

"Mr. Belt is not in the habit of spending days here," replied Aunt Chris with dignity; "and I am utterly at a loss to imagine what business you can possibly have to transact with him that could not be communicated by letter."

"Oh, a letter will do right enough. I only wished to give him instructions for an alteration in my will. You see, if you re-make yours, I shall have to considerably modify my testamentary arrangements."

And with this little outburst, half of fun, half of bad temper, Captain Dalton very wisely withdrew, leaving his aunts to condole with each other over the reckless change of manner he had exhibited since he had "taken up with that young person at the Dyke Farm."

His serenity of mood, however, returned to him before bedtime that night, when, to his infinite astonishment, Aunt Chris, as

she said her "good-night" to him, expressed a wish that he would ride over to the Dyke Farm and invite Miss Gunter—"Is that the name, Rex?"—on a ten days' visit to the Manor House.

"What can't be cured must be endured," she said with a sigh, "and since your heart is set on this girl, I suppose we must give in, and say we shall be glad to see her here, in order to make her acquaintance before she returns home."

## CHAPTER III.

Cows standing knee-deep in buttercups; larks uprising from amid the tangle of bluebells and long grasses; a general commotion and flutter of nest-building in the hedges where the young green is rapidly disappearing under the white of the opening hawthorn; the whole air laden with the sweet of the blooms of the overhanging limes.

Under these limes, and effectually hidden by the hedge from the high-road, are standing a man, a girl, and an Alderney heifer. The man is Rex Dalton, the girl is Clare Gunter, and the Alderney is—well, a beautiful, lithe, dun-coloured little creature, with a narrow head and muzzle, and brown, deer-like eyes.

The girl is standing bare-headed under the shadow of the limes in some white summer dress. She has filled her big straw-hat with the long, sweet grass. With this she is feeding the Alderney, apostrophising it meantime as "the dearest, sweetest old thing that ever was," and occasionally breaking off to go through a performance which Rex is pleased to designate as "rubbing noses," and which somehow does not seem altogether to meet with his approval.

"I wish you would let that beast feed itself," he grumbles; "she'll do it much better than you can. I don't believe you've heard one quarter of what I've been saying the last five minutes."

Clare looks up at him for a moment.

"Nothing you have said required an answer, so why should I make one?" she says, and then her eyes droop, and she fondles and feeds her Alderney once more.

She is a small, slender girl, with pale skin and dark hair. Her most noticeable points are her big brown eyes and sweet, soft voice. She is much given to sudden upliftings and down-droppings of those brown eyes, and makes them do duty for her voice on every opportunity.

Rex has not the slightest objection to those pretty brown eyes doing as much duty as possible, but he would like the equally pretty soft voice to bear its part in the day's work.

"I beg your pardon," he replies with great emphasis. "What I said to you a moment ago distinctly requires an answer. Do you wish me to repeat what I said—that if you did not accept Aunt Chris's invitation I should consider you did not wish to have anything more to do with me. Now, is this what you mean?"

A plain and straightforward question enough. One would think there could be no way out of answering it.

Clare, however, finds a way. Her nose and the Alderney's seem to dive simultaneously into the crown of the hat.

"Lolo is absolutely starving," she says, picking out some choice flowery bits for the animal's delectation. "Don't tease me with questions—I can't do two things at once."

"Well, then, let me feed the brute—if it's too imbecile to feed itself—while you stand by and try to do nothing but say 'yes' or 'no' to a plain question," says Rex, trying at the same moment to get possession of the straw-hat.

And then their fingers meet, then their eyes, and somehow their lips are very close, when the sudden sound of approaching wheels recalls to them the fact of their proximity to the high-road, and that anyone driving an ordinary dog-cart would command a tolerably clear view of the meadow in which they are standing.

Clare starts on one side, letting fall her hat, out of which the heifer calmly continues its meal. Rex looks up to recognise the Dalton horses and phaeton. Then an uncomfortable suspicion crosses his mind that that young lady in light travelling-ulster, seated on the front seat, is Miss Madge Burnside, who is expected that day—a fact he has forgotten while toying and trifling with Clare under the limes.

Miss Burnside looked down on them as the horses whirled her past. "What a pretty love-scene!" she thought. "I wonder if I shall meet those two anywhere while I'm here. They looked a lady and gentleman. Now that's the way lovemaking ought to be done. I don't suppose that girl's father ever said to that young man's mother—or aunt—'I want our children to fall in love with each other and get married.' No; depend upon it they've arranged it all for themselves, and if anyone interfered

with them, no doubt they would have something to say on the matter."

The truth must be owned: Madge Burnside's visit to the Manor House was not at all to her liking. Although not a word had been said to her to that effect, she knew perfectly well that she was being "trotted out" on inspection, and, being a high-spirited young woman of one or two and twenty, and very much accustomed to having her own way, she naturally enough objected to the process. Aunt Chris, when she wrote to Colonel Burnside, inviting Madge, had not said one word about Rex getting leave from his regiment at the same time, but she had enclosed his photograph, and said how she hoped he would soon marry and settle down at home. She was going downhill fast; if anything happened to her Ju would be utterly incapable of looking after the property, or even of herself, for the matter of that; and they would both like to be able to approve Rex's choice of a wife before they gave up the reins.

Colonel Burnside, on his part, had not uttered one word about Rex getting married; but as he had kissed Madge and packed her up for her journey, had said with something of a sigh and something of a smile: "If Captain Dalton should be at home, Madge, I hope you and he will hit it off well together. I'm getting on in life, child, and I should like to feel you will be well taken care of when I'm gone."

There was no time to answer her father's remark, as he had not got up his courage to make it till the train was moving off. But all the way to Harrow-Dene Madge kept answering it in her own mind, and sometimes out loud with some such little jerky exclamation as "Ridiculous! Who ever heard of made-up marriages turning out well?" or, "If I like living at home, and having my own way in everything, why may I not be allowed to do so?" or, "If those two dear old people were so bent on arranging a Dalton-Burnside alliance, why didn't they propose to each other?" And, finally (and this exclamation was on her lips as she alighted at the front door of the Manor House), "I'm positive I sha'n't like them—the old aunts, I mean; but there's one comfort, if I don't I can easily take care that they sha'n't like me. That won't be difficult to manage."

Certainly Madge's first view of Aunt Chris was not prepossessing. Something had evidently put her out, and she was haranguing one of the maids in a rasping sort of voice that reminded Madge of

the slate-pencil scratchings of her old school-days.

"There ought to have been a telegram here by this time if he didn't mean to come," she was saying over and over again in most emphatic style. Then she caught sight of Madge coming up the front steps, and went to meet her.

"Everything has gone wrong to-day," she explained as she led the way into a room opening off the hall. "I have a big tea-party on to-night in the servants' hall; I give one every Easter to the attendants at my mothers' meeting. Well, everything has gone wrong over it somehow; everyone has forgotten something that ought to have been done, and now the clergyman in London whom I wrote to the other day to come down expressly to address the mothers after their tea, and who ought to be here by this time, hasn't arrived, and hasn't telegraphed to say whether he will or won't come."

"Here's a splendid opportunity for making an unfavourable impression; there's nothing like first impressions," thought Madge, looking all round her, and deciding that the room was very sweet and pretty with its masses of wallflowers and Lent-lilies, and stretch of old-fashioned flower-garden showing through the long French-windows, but that surely a more sour-faced old lady couldn't be found to set amid such sweet surroundings.

She put on her most saucy look and smile as she answered:

"Well, if it were fathers, not mothers, who wanted addressing, I'd offer my services. I rather excel in that sort of thing."

"There, she won't like that to begin with," she thought. "I'm sure she can't stand familiarity, or contradiction, or fun in any shape or form."

Aunt Chris frowned, but ignored the remark, going on briskly with her complainings:

"The rector is old, and doesn't like to be bothered. Besides that, he doesn't express my views. Now, the man I have sent for from London, besides being my godson, never fails to express my views whenever I want it done."

"Then he ought to have been a photographer instead of a clergyman, I should think," said Madge, saucily as before, and wondering in her own mind what these "views" must be that called for such careful expressing.

"Anyhow," she thought, "it's a comfort

she has 'views,' for I'm sure, whatever they are, they won't be mine, and I'll take the first chance that offers to convince her of the fact."

When Rex, about an hour afterwards, came in with Clare—whose reluctance to accept Aunt Chris's invitation he had somehow managed to overcome—they found Aunt Chris, with positively "thunderous" frown on her face, standing in front of Madge, who, seated on a low chair, was tapping the floor energetically with her foot, and talking with extreme vehemence and rapidity.

Clare took immediate fright at Aunt Chris's black looks.

"Oh, let us go back—I can't face her!" she whispered to Rex. "Something must have put her out."

"Oh, not at all!" Rex answered. "Aunt Chris often looks like that when she's pleased at anything."

Madge gave a great start when she was introduced. So, then, it was Captain Dalton of whom she had had such a fascinating glimpse under the limes. What a special providence it was that she had thus seen those two together! Now nothing those two old aunts could say would take her in.

Rex looked conscious and uncomfortable as he shook hands, but tried to affect a nonchalant manner. Clare looked sweet, demure, and shy as ever.

"She's very pretty," thought Madge. "Just the sort of girl men go mad after, but—but I should say she was no end of a flirt."

And looking into a mirror that hung over Clare's head, she fell to comparing Clare's attractions with her own, and found they contrasted with a marvellous exactness. To begin with, she was a good seven inches taller than Clare; had a complexion that inclined to roses instead of lilies; a quantity of fair frizzy hair instead of straight brown plaits; eyes that were blue, frank, and merry, and that would look you straight in the face; and a mouth that was a little large, perhaps, but that expressed before anything else a courage to speak out, and a will to hold one's own in life.

Aunt Ju, coming into the room at that moment, got sadly "mixed" between the two girls. She somehow at once concluded that Clare must be Colonel Burnside's only daughter and heiress, and went up to her, kissed her with effusion, asked after her father, and said how glad she was to make her acquaintance.

"You have the Douglas nose, and mouth, and chin, my dear," she added, "but you have the Burnside eyes and hair."

"Then she ought to be made to hand them over to me," said Madge with decision, "for they can't possibly belong to her."

Of course all the young people laughed at Aunt Ju's mistake. But Aunt Chris frowned, and looked anything but inclined to laugh, and went on talking a good deal about everything going wrong that day, and how sure she was that her tea would be a failure, and what should she do with the mother after their tea was over, now that there was nobody to explain her "views" to them.

Madge did not talk so fluently now the others came in. For one thing, she felt she had already accomplished a very successful morning's work. She had contradicted Aunt Chris at least thirty times in as many minutes, and during another thirty had talked the wildest fun and nonsense of which a young woman could be capable. For another, Rex somehow slipped into her place in the conversation, and bore the burden of talk with remarkable ease, according to his wont. He felt in high spirits that morning. He had succeeded in getting Clare to the house, and here she was bound to win everyone's heart, sooner or later, with her sweet, gentle ways.

Then, also, Madge was a far nicer girl than he had anticipated she could be from the encomiums that had so lavishly been passed upon the Burnside family by the aunts. Her frank manners and lack of self-consciousness were altogether charming. He made up his mind to seize the very first opportunity that offered for a long talk with her (she was exactly the girl a man could talk with on easy, friendly terms), enlist her sympathies for himself and Clare, and get her to do her utmost with the aunts for them.

He congratulated himself greatly on this little plan, saying to himself what an altogether refined, delicate way it would be of scattering to the four winds any nonsense the girl might have had put into her head as to the desirability of a Dalton-Burnside matrimonial arrangement.

#### CHAPTER IV.

It was the morning after Madge's arrival at the Manor House, and it had dawned a hopelessly wet day. There was

no chance for pleasant walks, rides, or drives, so under pretence of showing Madge the family portraits, Rex had got her alone in the picture-gallery, and was doing his utmost to convince her what good results must accrue if she would take Clare under her wing and "champion" her generally with the aunts.

Madge, somehow, seemed incredulous on the matter.

"I'm very fond of 'championing,' as you call it; I've done a lot that way," she said. "I have an uncle, with seven children, married again, and every one of those children I stick up for on every opportunity against their stepmother. So it isn't want of will, you see; but I don't think it would be of any use."

"But it would be no end of use," said Rex hotly. "Aunt Chris thinks an immense deal of you—"

"Oh, impossible. If you could but have heard us arguing together and contradicting each other yesterday, you wouldn't say so."

"Arguing—contradicting! Why, that's exactly what Aunt Chris glories in. Nothing pleases her better. I found that out quite as a small boy, and worked the idea well to my own advantage. You see, Aunt Chris isn't half so bad as she looks. When she's biting her lip and frowning so horribly she's generally in the best of tempers."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Madge; "then I did it all wrong yesterday. How she did frown, to be sure! I might as well have spared my pains."

"Wha—at?" said Rex, looking puzzled.

Then he went on explaining, thinking Madge couldn't have understood.

"There's Aunt Ju, who gives in in everything and never has an opinion of her own. Well, Aunt Chris only tolerates her; me she adores because I contradict and defy her on every possible opportunity."

"Oh, dear! why did no one write and tell me this before I came!"

Again Rex looked puzzled, and again he went on:

"And there's Evan Price—you know, the Rev. Evan who turned up all right last night after all, and expounded Aunt Chris's views—well, she has a positive contempt for him, and makes no end of fun of him."

"Oh, dear!" again sighed Madge; "I told her yesterday he must have missed his vocation, and ought to have been a photographer instead of a clergyman."

"She has told him that herself, or something like it," laughed Rex. "He's a

good sort of fellow enough; has lots of money, and a tolerably good living in London; but alas! his blood is not of the bluest, his father is a brewer, his grandfather was a hop-factor; farther back than that he does not date. Aunt Chris in a moment of weakness consented to be his godmother."

"Which concession he acknowledges by holding himself in readiness to expound her views whenever such expounding should be deemed necessary!" queried Madge.

"Exactly. And his attention in this respect Aunt Chris again acknowledges by introducing him to the county and good society generally. Hush! here he comes—and Clare too. It's odd that he and Clare should know each other. Clare, it seems, attends his church in London."

"Miss Gunter and I have been having a long discussion as to the relative merits of penny-banks and clothing-clubs," said Mr. Price as he came in; "and we have come to the conclusion they should be worked upon the self-supporting principle. What do you think?"

This Rev. Evan Price was in appearance a young lady's beau-ideal of a clergyman. He was tall and slender, with pale, beardless face, large, enthusiastic eyes, and deep, pathetic voice. His manner was intensely expressive. His "Give me the salt" at table implied a request that, complied with, would make him your debtor for life; his "Thank you" as good as a written acknowledgment of the said indebtedness. Somehow, in his company, Rex's manner always seemed to increase in brusqueness and decision.

He answered a little brusquely now:

"'Penny-banks—clothing-clubs—self-supporting principle'—shut up, Price! It strikes me we shall all have to be self-supporting so far as amusement is concerned if this rain keeps on as it threatens."

Now here by a decree of fate were a parson, a soldier, two pretty girls, and two old maiden aunts to be shut up within the four walls of a country house for the whole of seven rainy days. Those walls will surely have a story to tell when the seventh day comes round!

#### CHAPTER V.

THERE could be no doubt about it—Madge Burnside was in a very bad temper. Chinese gong-sticks could not have dealt more cruelly with the keys of the piano

than did her slender fingers one morning after she and Clare Gunter had been about a week at the Manor House.

"It is disgraceful—it is outrageous!" she said to herself, as she struck her preliminary chords, and ran off into a fine tempestuous prelude; "I said at the first she was a great flirt, and now I am positive of it! After all the 'championing' I have done for her—the way in which I have stood up for her with Aunt Chris! It is abominable! She is just playing off those two men one against the other—she cares for neither; she'll marry the one it suits her to marry. I hope it'll be the parson; Captain Dalton is miles too good for her."

Rex came strolling into the room at this moment. Strange to say, he seemed to be in a bad temper also.

"What on earth are you playing?" he asked. "All the window panes are rattling. Even the wine-glasses on the lunch-table in the next room are ringing again."

Madge looked up a moment.

"It's Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata," she said, continuing her roulades with unflagging brilliancy.

"Good Heavens, I thought it was a battle-piece! There seemed a continual stampede of men and horses, and a running fire all through." He paused, then added, the frown on his forehead deepening: "Have you seen Clare—has she been through this room?"

Madge, with a tremendous crescendo, brought her sonata to a close.

"She went through here half an hour ago with Mr. Price," she answered. "I dare say they are playing billiards—or pretending to;" this added sotto voce.

Rex checked some angry expression. He went close up to the piano.

"Look here, Miss Burnside," he said; "you are a girl, and ought to know all about girls; can you tell me what all this means?"

"Can't. Haven't the least idea. Why don't you ask her yourself?" answered Madge brusquely, starting an exercise with marvellous energy with her right hand.

"Oh, do stop a minute; don't you see I want to consult you. I want your advice, your opinion about it all."

"Haven't any," said Madge, beginning with her left hand now; "ask Miss Gunter for hers, it would be far more straightforward."

"I have, and can get no satisfaction out of her. Don't you see it's just this: I don't

want to make a fool of myself and kick the Rev. Evan out of the house about nothing at all—that is, if it is nothing at all—at the same time I don't want to be made a fool of, and to have those two laughing at me. Oh, do leave off—you'll drive me frantic!"

Madge did leave off.

"Do you mean to say," she cried scornfully, "that you think the girl you are engaged to is capable of laughing at you?"

"Ah, but I don't know that we are engaged. Clare never would say 'yes' or 'no' for certain. She used to like walking about the meadows and lanes with me; but, whenever I asked her outright if she would marry me, she would always talk about something else."

Madge went off into scales now—brilliantly as before.

Rex grew impatient. He put his hands across hers on the keys.

"I thought you were going to listen to me. Don't you see I really want your help? Clare is coming out in such a new light, I am regularly fogged all round."

"Ask Clare to help you out of your fog."

"I have. Only this morning I asked her what she and Price could find to talk about in the corner while I was playing whist with you and the aunts last night, and she answered so sweetly—she made me feel like a brute immediately—she was only talking about their 'sick philanthropic,' whatever that means, in which they are 'mutually' interested."

No remark from Madge, only she manages to get her hands free, and the scales recommence more furiously than ever.

Rex begins to lose his temper.

"I thought all girls were kind-hearted and ready to help a fellow when he wanted help."

"Did you? I'm not, you see."

"Well, I thought every one of you had opinions and ideas, and were ready to let them out at a moment's notice."

"Did you? Some of us have opinions—and keep them to ourselves."

"Oh, do stop, Miss Burnside! For Heaven's sake, give me just the glimmering of an idea what your opinion is at the present moment about—about Clare and me—and—and—the Rev. Evan."

"Can't; it's too bad to give."

"Too bad! Why?—why? Do explain!" and once more he lays his hands across hers on the keys, and effectually stops the rattling scales.



Madge jumps up from the music-stool.

"Well, if you will have it, my opinion is just this: Clare is not one bit in love with you; you are not one bit in love with her. As to Mr. Price, I can say nothing; I don't know him."

"Not in love? Clare? I?" repeats Rex, his face flushing a deep red.

"No. Clare is not in love with you, for, if she were, she would not be whispering soft nothings with another man over a billiard-table, but would be in here, behind us, to find out what you and I are talking about all this time. And you are not in love with Clare, because, if you were, instead of being in here, asking me for my opinion about it all, you would be in there with them, giving your own in a very decided manner. There—are you satisfied?"

Rex had no chance for a reply. With her last word, she swept out of the room.

#### CHAPTER VI.

"MR. BELT is a wonderful man—one in a thousand," once more asserted Aunt Chris, shutting up her ledger with a pronounced snap, and tapping emphatically on its cover with her gold pencil-case.

Aunt Chris was a famous woman of business. In consort with Mr. Belt she regulated all monetary details of her family estate. Her ledgers and diaries were unfailing objects of admiration to Aunt Ju, who was erratic and unreliable in the matter of account-keeping.

"Where we should all have been without him, I'm sure I don't know," acquiesced Aunt Ju.

"I don't say that. I'm not prepared to say after all these years that I'm incapable of managing my family affairs, even without the aid of Mr. Belt; but I will say that his advice has been most valuable, under what might have been a very unfortunate combination of circumstances."

"And how admirably everything has turned out—just exactly as we hoped! It must have come to you by inspiration to ask Evan down—just at the right moment."

"Inspiration! nonsense! It was common-sense. I knew how extremely willing Evan is on every possible occasion, not only to express my views, but also to reduce them to practice. I'm bound to admit, however, chance favoured me here, for of course I hadn't the remotest notion that he and Miss Gunter were acquainted

in London; in fact, I might say had carried on something of a flirtation over their church-work."

"I suppose they've settled everything by this time; they were a long time together yesterday in the billiard-room."

"No doubt; that wet week came in most opportunely. I told Evan this morning he had better be thinking of going back to his work again now, and he could have the pleasure of escorting Miss Gunter as far as the Dyke Farm on his way back. I've promised him to let the girl be married from our house, and that I will arrange about the invitations, so as to get the right people to come. He appreciated that."

"I imagine so. I am glad that things were managed so quietly, and that he and Rex didn't come to hot words over it."

"Oh, I told him beforehand I wouldn't have anything of that sort in the house. I also told him that, before he left to-day, he'd better have a little explanation with Rex, so as to leave no ill-feeling behind."

Outside in the garden the "little explanation" was going on at that very moment between the two men.

The rain was over and gone; May sunshine was once more waking up the world to life and beauty. The birds were making a fine racket in the old orchard among the apple and plum trees, which showed like big pink and white nosegays in their setting of tender green foliage. Lilac, lily-of-the-valley, and hawthorn shook out their fragrance with a careless prodigality over the old garden, with its corkscrew walks and fantastically-shaped lawn.

Up and down the terrace that flanked the house Evan and Rex were walking slowly, leisurely, with not a sign of "hot words" between them. Evan might have used precisely the same intonation in the pulpit when he said:

"I hope I have made everything clear and plain to you, Captain Dalton, and that there is no shadow of misconception in your mind on any one point!"

Rex answered a little bluntly, as his wont was when addressing Evan:

"Everything's as plain as a pikestaff. Miss Gunter and you were 'as good as engaged' before she came down here on a visit. She meets me by chance, and doesn't see any necessity for informing me of the fact. You meet her by chance—in this house—and see every necessity for reminding her of it. The thing is as clear as noonday."

"And there is not the slightest feeling of annoyance in your mind on the matter—no latent feeling of irritation?" queried Mr. Price with pathetic emphasis.

Rex answered with a laugh:

"Not the ghost of such a thing. My dear fellow, if I wanted ever so much to make a row over it, I couldn't for the life of me get the steam up."

As he spoke, his eyes wandered down the garden-path to where Clare and Madge were coming in through the orchard-gate with big bunches of wallflowers and daffodils in their hands.

The girls appeared to have been going through a feminine counterpart of the interview of the two men.

"It wasn't honest, it wasn't right," Madge was saying as they came up the garden.

"But, you know, I was not really sure Mr. Price cared for me," Clare was saying pleadingly; "and you've no idea how dull it was at the Dyke Farm. The Gunters are all babies under six—except the mother and father, of course—it would have been so miserable wandering about the fields and lanes all by myself."

"I don't care!" reiterated Madge. "It wasn't honest, and might have done no end of harm!"

"But I don't think it has," laughed Rex, hearing her last sentence, and guessing to what it referred. Then he held out his hand to Clare.

"I've just been told I may congratulate you, Miss Gunter. I'm sure I wish you every happiness."

If a week ago Rex had been told he would address such words as these with such calm indifference to Clare Gunter, he would have laughed the idea to scorn.

"I wonder if he wants to say anything else to her before they part," thought Madge. So she wandered back through the orchard-gate, in among the plum and apple trees, burying her face in her big nosegay as she went, for somehow her cheeks were hot, and the scent of the wallflowers seemed to cool and refresh them.

But Rex had evidently nothing more to say, for she had not gone ten steps along the orchard-path before he was by her side.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"Are you looking for anything?"

It was no wonder he should ask that question. He had never seen Madge Burnside's eyes so downcast before.

"I'm looking for violets," she answered

readily enough. "Aunt Chris said the sweetest grew under these apple-trees."

Those violets, not a doubt, took a long time to find. Clare and Evan said their adieux to Aunt Chris, and set off on their homeward journey; the luncheon-bell rang once, twice; yet never a sign of Madge or Rex. Aunt Ju went looking for them in the picture-gallery; Aunt Chris put on a woollen hood, and went forth in search into the garden.

At the orchard-gate she came upon them walking towards the house, hand-in-hand, Madge looking very flushed and happy, Rex very conscious and proud.

"Aunt Chris," he said, speaking out boldly, "I've something to tell you—something that will give you a great deal of pleasure."

"My dear," and this with one of her most terrible frowns, "you may spare yourself the trouble. I know exactly what it is."

And somehow Madge felt very small when, as Aunt Chris took her by the hand and kissed her, she said:

"Ah, you young people, you think you wind up all the clocks in life, and keep all the wheels going, while your elders look on and do nothing. I dare say it is so—in novels and poetry, that is—but, believe me, in real life, as a rule, things are managed quite the other way."

## AT THE GLEN'S FOOT.

### CHAPTER I.

THE May sun came sweeping from across the fair hilly island. The long, narrow, mountainous domain of the whilom Kings of Man was green and golden in the spring light—golden with sunshine and its own marvellous wealth of primroses; green with the newly-opened young leafage of its fields and fairy glens. Can any island match the glens of Man in early summer?

Nora Quayle, a Manx maiden of some years ago, was sauntering in most happy, easy, unburdened style along a bowery lane.

Her hands were full of the fair Manx primroses; her fingers broke some to pieces in the reckless over-abundance of her wealth; her arm carried a basket whose brown lid was half-open, propped up with the yellow beauties.

She was a tall, slight girl, with dark hair and with blue eyes; a girl with no

features to talk of if you want them described in classic order; nevertheless, they were features which were lightly and fairly moulded—go to Man and you will see many such a girl of the old Manx race, hailing, as one may say, from the dim past, when the Manx Kings knew they came from Ireland, over the way there.

Once upon a time, Nora and her people—had she only lived farther back in history than she did—might have had tough work to do in upholding the dignity of the sovereign of Man; as it was, she was quite a modern girl, and her people were simply Manx gentlefolk. The wars of Man were over long ago, and the island was only a busy, peaceful, thriving place. An advancing place, though, for was there not talk of a regular weekly steamer being started between Douglas and Liverpool?

Such news slipped in and out of the ears of Nora and her sisters; what did they want with steamers, or with England? They were Manx. If they married well, then their husbands might make the wedding-tour across the seas in England. So the girls might talk, but such talk was like the news of the new steamer—it came and slipped away.

Everything for them was on the island, or in the green, rolling seas, which played in giant grandeur in the summer-time, and in winter roared as only the Atlantic can roar against a rock-bound coast.

The years had run round, and Nora was a woman—seventeen. Meta Quayle was a year younger; Alice, the eldest, was a year and a half older. As Nora went along, she hummed a song then in vogue—one which had been the rage in England six months ago; but was new and “the thing” in Man this spring.

As Nora went, her musings fell upon things that had fallen about May-time. She and Meta had followed the ancient custom on May Eve, and they had made the customary little crosses of the kearn or rowan tree, and had set them up by the doors of the outhouses—if not, who could say what harm the fairies and the witches would not do? Alice and their father had caught the two over their work, and had laughed at them; they were not so foolish as to believe in such nonsense; and then, when they had just got rid of these torments, and were intent on smuggling a tiny cross under the untidy periwinkle, so that they should fix it against the front of the very house itself, who should come up but Johnny Denison!

Johnny Denison was soon to be Alice's husband—how could the girls let him see what they were doing?

So that little cross was flung away by Meta across the great tangled lawn, or field more properly, in front of the house, and they said no word to the young man about their little superstitions.

Nevertheless, Meta said:

“I don't like it, Nora; I tremble now I have thrown it away. Do you go indoors with this sweet youth, and I'll have a hunt for my cross. It's worse than neglect to treat them so. And why should all the folks think so much of the fairies if there are no such people, I'd like to know?”

“It's done!” Nora answered decisively.

But Meta had had her hunt, and unsuccessfully. Now Nora, weeks after, was thinking of that same business.

Now one knows how thoughts are brought into one's mind. Nothing of Nora's doing, that sweet fresh afternoon, had been of a sort to bring the old custom to her mind; nevertheless, she found herself, as she broke and scattered her primroses to the four winds, thinking—and thinking in a troubled way, of the scorn and contempt she and Meta had cast upon the tricky people.

Do you know the Manx lanes? They are very often rough, and stony, and hilly. Such a one was Nora climbing. Lovely and beautiful for a poet or a painter, for its walls were of young ferns, banking up to the thick tangled greenery of an unkempt hedgerow; and its roof was of the light spring leafage of many elms and ash-trees; but below it might have been the bed of a mountain torrent.

It was a short cut from Glen Maye to the high-road. Nora had got her primroses, and ever since her babyhood her feet had clambered up and down that lane, so her thoughts fell quite away from it.

Things had been going on so brilliantly of late, that she was reasoning out a disbelief in the fairies; there could be no harm in scorning them. She would never again do as she had done—as the ignorant peasant-folk did—no, never again!

Soon she was in the high-road. For a long while she was the only human figure upon it; a sombre, ruddy figure, for she wore a dress of some dull crimson stuff, and her hat—they called them gipey-hats in those days—was black, and was tied down over her ears by black strings. Her sharply marked shadow was just a dimmer colour than herself; the road stretched

wide, and white, and dusty in the blaze of sunlight. Presently, a cart came along, loaded with fishing-nets, being carried down to one of the fishing-ports of the west coast; then a boy leading a cow with a rope passed her; then for a space she was alone; then two men came along.

Strangely Nora flushed, for one was her brother—her brother Harry!

But why should she flush?

Simply because Harry was a sailor, and was away for a cruise; he was in the West Indies then, she knew.

Her little start was noted by the two men; one spoke to the other.

Then the three came nearly abreast of each other, and Nora, whose surprise had been quickly mastered by an instinct of swift and keen enquiry, was gazing into the stranger's face. He must be a stranger! Yes, he was bearded.

No; there was Harry's twinkling eye—what a mad boy he was! Boy! and twenty-one!

Again she must change. The stranger was not a seafaring man of any sort or kind; he was dressed as a man of fashion would be dressed. Now Manx society was not behind the times, but Nora's quick sense detected a difference; Manx tailoring had not turned out those clothes.

Then having come to the conclusion that her eyes had played her false, she as quickly turned away her head and passed on. Who were they? Strangers were rare in those days.

Nora was as curious as most girls can be, and was cogitating as to how she should find out. A very few seconds had brought her to that point when—no one else had passed her on the road—she heard someone running behind her. She turned.

It was one of the two men—not the bearded one.

"Miss Quayle," he said. He was fair and as handsome a fellow as one would wish to see. Directly he spoke, Nora knew he was no Manxman. A Londoner, thought she.

"Yes," she answered; "but you do not know me!"

"That is true and yet, you see, I have learnt your name. We did not think of meeting you; he—I was told no one ever was seen on this road."

Nora was amused, and she was of a fearless nature.

"Was that why you chose it?" she said lightly.

"Yes, it was."

"Then——" The gaiety went out of her face, and she drew herself up and apart.

A slight flush burnt on the man's fair cheeks, and he, too, unconsciously seemed braced with pride. Then he shook himself slightly, as if he would cast off all but what was the outward show of this meeting.

"When you go home, Miss Quayle, if you are asked anything about your walk, will you forget that you met me—met us, I will say?"

"And why?" Nora was, as we have said, entirely fearless; the ways of her life, too, had been utterly out of the ken of the world's wickedness. Something struck her here like the scent of an adventure of some sort, and yet she saw no danger in questioning this stranger. "Why should I not say I met you?—met you and Harry's double?"

"Harry's double!" cried the stranger. His surprise was certainly not veiled.

"Yes," she nodded her head, "Harry's double. If you must know, I have a brother whom, like an idiot, I took to be the man who was with you. But Harry is just now in the West Indies, so——"

"Plainly he could not be here." Such an extreme relief marked this speech that it struck Nora.

"Why do you speak so?" she cried.

"I do not know—yes, I do know. Miss Quayle, I am a bad actor, but I am bound to silence. Silence for a day or two—silence is the only thing I crave—will you be silent for me?"

What a strange tone! How he pleaded, and yet in what a lordly way!

Nora felt helpless; and yet there was the spice of bravery in her which resented that feeling of helplessness; if she agreed to be silent, it should not be without a disclaimer.

"And if harm should come of my silence, what harm could speaking do?"

"Much——"

"Well!" she gave her head a toss of a rather wilful nature, "if harm does come I am not answerable. I shall say nothing; I am not bound to say who I met, or who I did not meet, am I?"

"No." The word was given as if the speaker were occupied with further thoughts. "There is more, though," he went on rather hesitatingly—"more to ask you."

"Ask on," she said.

Some people had called Nora Quayle wild,

but whether this were true or not, she certainly, in this interview, had some fire in her which made her act without the least fear. She felt reckless in a gay sort of way.

"It is such a complication!" he began. "If only you had not met us!—but you recognise faces quickly."

"You think that, because I took your bearded friend for Harry. Harry has no hair on his face, but," she gave a little laugh, "the rest was as like as—as——"

"As I shall be to a stranger whom you may see soon—to-morrow, the next day, nay, perhaps to night; I cannot say when."

Nora was wild.

"And if you are the stranger, why should not the bearded man be Harry? Answer that."

The stranger threw his head back with a gesture of pride and yet of discomfort. A quick flush came into his face, as with a manner as bright and as reckless as her own, he said:

"Why not, indeed! Can I answer that, Miss Quayle?" He shrugged his shoulders as a foreigner does, and yet he was no foreigner. "Certainly I cannot."

On that very evening, Nora, having been wandering in the grounds of her home, went in as the spring twilight was falling, and was told not to go into the dining-room, because her father was there. A stranger had come.

Presently, Mr. Quayle was heard to be talking, amicably and hospitably, with this stranger, and to go upstairs with him.

There the stranger was left, and the master of the house acquainted his women-folk, his wife and daughters, with the fact of a Mr. Bowen having come, bearing an introduction from Harry. He had seen Harry at the Bermudas, and Harry, hearing that he was going on business to the Isle of Man as soon as he could get to England, had, sailor like, jumped to the conclusion that Ballafane, his father's house, must be his quarters; he had written to his father bidding him "give Bowen a shake-down. You'll find him a good sort of fellow." Then the letter ended with this: "Don't look for me as soon as I said, for I have had too much of land, and if I can exchange and go off on a longer cruise I shall. I'll write when I can. Bowen off to England to-morrow. The Celeste (Harry's ship) sails from here in two days."

The letter was dated from "The Bermudas, Dec. 31st."

The interval was easily bridged. Mr. Bowen was the best of company, and that evening won as appreciative an audience as ever did Othello, over his talk of travellers' adventuring.

For days the stranger stayed on. He went here and there, but each evening he was at home. The grounds of Ballafane were large enough, and the girls of Ballafane were charming enough to enchain even an exacting personage, and Richard Bowen—"Dick Bowen," as the stranger said he was called—was far too polished, far too much a man of the world to suggest any such matter as the possibility of his being "exacting."

## CHAPTER II.

BAD weather set in. For a day and a night a gale blew like fury from the south-west—that means that it roared up Glen Maye, and would tear from its opening on the high land over the fields and homesteads behind. The old trees embosoming Ballafane shook, and swayed, and shrieked. Lying so near to so rocky a coast, the people in the village about were all alive to the fears of wreckage.

A craft, of unknown nationality, had been lying off and on, pushing too close in for safety in such a gale; at last she had sailed away.

You would fancy that to girls living in such a house as Ballafane was, this fact about the strange craft would have been of no interest whatever. But the Manx are nothing if not a seafaring folk; men, women, and children look to the sea as to an element as much their own as the green hilly land on which their homes are built, and the Ballafane people talked as much about the craft drifting about in the gale, as did the fisher-folk on the shore.

When Johnny Denison brought in the news of her sailing away north, of her going well past the Mull of Galloway, Nora laughed.

"She is gone into the infinite!" she cried. "A vision—lost!"

"I do not catch some occult meaning;" and the stranger, by no means a stranger by this time, looked to Nora, and to Denison, and to Nora again.

"Then be wise;" and Nora set up a manner of grave advice. "Do not probe the mysterious, skim along the top of it—that's fun; but to dive into the interior secrecies—beware!"

"You only make me curious."

"You know nothing of our ways here,"

began Meta. "I'd like you to get old Peter Quine when he talks——"

"Peter Quine!" Bowen knew the name, he did not know that the girls knew the man who owned the name.

"It is all nothing," Alice put in here. "Peter Quine, and the mystery, and the whole business, are summed up in one word."

"And that is——?"

"Smugglers."

"No!"

"Did I not tell you you were wholly ignorant of our ways here?" Nora cried. "Why, the whole village was crammed with smugglers once upon a time, though the men called themselves fishermen. They don't smuggle now—oh no, we are all quite immaculate; but they do say——" Three mysterious nods ended her speech.

"They do say—what?" Mr. Bowen asked in his light, free manner. How can it be described?—a manner so light as to be somewhat careless, but now and again tinged with a proud reserve. He gave no history of himself; that is, he was always telling of matters that had happened to or about himself, and yet, put it all together, and what was it? Simply that he was a wanderer; he had met Harry Quayle in the Bermudas; he had done this and done that; Harry was his idea of "a good fellow," but—that was all. It never struck the Ballafane people, but he never had really said who and what he was. His father—his home? There was not one word known about either.

"They do say—what?" he repeated, for he had not been answered.

"Well; you'll not divulge it to any authorities when you go back to England, will you?"

"Most assuredly not." The reply was given with satisfying decision.

"Because we should not like to have an army of revenue-officers bearing down upon us. Fancy seeing Ballafane searched for excisable articles—terrible!"

"Heaven forefend!" Bowen's face of terror was acted to perfection.

"Do not be profane," and Nora put her hand out in laughing reproof, "and I will confide the melancholy truth—no supposition—that Glen Maye is even now known to see various queer kegs, or bales, or I know not what, carried up on cloudy nights; there is a full moon now, so Quine and the Glen are as innocent as—as—as I am."

Bowen said nothing here, but he

frowned. A moment after his brow cleared, and he laughed aloud. Then he shook back his hair, short enough, but still he had the trick of tossing back a stray curl that fell forward. So long ago, you see, fashionable young men did not affect such closely-cut hair as they do at present. His eyes laughed, and he lightly said: "And what, Miss Quayle, if you find out that I am one of those very revenue-officers?"

"Nora!" Meta's face actually grew white.

"You are nothing of the sort; you are a gentleman!" cried impulsive Nora.

But Nora, having flashed forth this, fell silent. Bowen bowed.

"Perhaps you think I might more probably be a—a free-lance myself?"

"No, I do not think that; smuggling is wrong; it is against law."

"Thank you for both sides of your judgment," he answered laughingly; "I shall take all the implied flattery."

"There was none!"

"Don't quarrel," Meta interposed; "if only the gale would drop, we'd take you to the Glen, and you should hear a thing or two from old Quine."

It was odd that a young man, such a young man as this Mr. Bowen was, athletic, strong and fearless, should make such an excuse as he did: "A very charming idea—yes; but, as you say, quite impossible to be carried out now. These glens are dangerous with a gale sweeping up them."

"Not at all," Nora corrected. "With a gale sweeping down, Maye might be awkward, because one might get hurried downwards rather more swiftly than one would like; but with a gale blowing up—nothing could be more splendid! We'll go, Mr. Bowen."

Two days afterwards, with the gale as strong as ever, though weather-wise folk prophesied a change as the moon changed that very night, the girls and Johnny Denison would go to Glen Maye. Mr. Bowen made out that he had a great desire to drive over to Ramsay; but no, the girls would have Ramsay seen some other day, and nothing but Glen Maye would satisfy them on this particular morning.

June had just come in, and summer was declaring himself. Out in these northern seas the dulcet breathings of summer do not hold away so early as in southern towns, but the roses were opening pink buds over the hedgerows, even though

down below at the roots there were still the massed carpetings of yellow primroses. When the gale blew itself away, soft airs would follow, and summer would reign unchallenged.

Half-way down the Glen—it is but a little one—an old man, a white-haired sailor-fellow, came sauntering up. His beard was yellowish-white; his uncovered head was snowy-white; he wore a home-knitted jersey of Manx wool, and trousers of brown, homespun Manx cloth. In his hand he had a telescope, its outer leather casing worn, and black, and shiny.

As the party, laughing gaily, rounded a bend of the Glen—Bowen went first, strangely enough, for he could be no guide—the old fellow threw up his hand that held the telescope. Did also those keen, steel-blue eyes of his shoot a glance of surprise at Bowen?

Whether Bowen saw anything of this surprise, or whether he answered if he did see it, no one can say, for in a second he wheeled round, and cried out aloud, unnecessarily loud:

"So this is your friend Peter Quine? because if so, I met him yesterday morning." Then as swiftly as he had faced the party, he turned again, and talking on, said: "Yes, my friend; I saw you on the Peel Road yesterday morning; that is so—is it not?"

"Aye, aye, sir—may be so, though I'm a bit dim o' sight."

"Nonsense, Peter! You dim of sight!" Nora cried. "You see best on dark nights, perhaps—like cats."

"Eh, missie—she will have her joke; but, miss, don't ye mind tales about me. Quine bean't now what Quine wur years ago. Then I don't say but what me and the lads had fine work o' murky nights. Nowadays times is changed. Aye, aye—changed more'n a bit."

"Well, we won't stop now to talk, Peter, but just come down the Glen with us. We want you to show everything to our friend. Is not Glen Maye the best glen in Man?"

"Eh! an' it iss so. The beautifulest in summer-time for the maids with their flowers, aye, and as—as strong as any of them."

"Strong!" laughed Nora; "what a word! But I guess what you mean. More than one path up it, lots of turns, big trees, hollows that will do for caves—ah, Peter, I can understand you! Now tell our friend that story of the run that September night. Who hid three men in a rabbit-hole?"

"Eh, Miss Nora, but you'll be hard on an old chap! Maybe it's no safe to tell that yarn to your friend."

"Look him in the face, Peter," Nora decided. "Does he look false?"

Actually old Quine's eyes laughed.

"Sure, no, missee. He's the true gentleman if ever eyes saw that same!"

"I thought you were Manx, Quine, not Irish." Meta shook a finger at him.

"And that I am, Miss Meta; pure Manx. But will a Manxman not say the civil word when it's the true word at the same time—mind there, Miss Nora, that's an ugly stone." He placed himself in front of what might have been a small clearing—a clearing whence a goat or a good climber would make for an upper ledge or path. There he stood until he had seen all safely down except Bowen. Was Bowen's foot more sure of the ground than those other feet, which had been accustomed to the rough glen-paths ever since they could first step?

The others ran on, hearing old Quine's voice above them, saying:

"And I'll be telling you one of my yarns—eh, sir?"

Nora must talk.

"Not any one of your yarns, but that particular one you know about—you know which one I mean. Here's the beginning: 'It was in the first days of the equinox—the moon was a day old.'"

"Ha, ha! she knows it. Aye, sir, maybe you've heard it afore?" he winked.

Nora stood still, looking up.

"Go on, Quine; he cannot have heard it, for we have never told him. It's better to hear these things at first hand. Go on. 'It was in the first days—'"

She suddenly stopped, and pointed up aloft. The two men, Quine and young Bowen, looked as her finger directed.

They saw nothing.

"Wur it a rabbit, missee?" Quine's question came persuasively.

"A rabbit in June? Yes." Nora's tone was scorn itself. Then her bright face clouded, and she became strangely pale; she was all at once conquered by the superstitious beliefs of the island. "I saw Harry's ghost, Quine!"

No need for Quine to understand whom she meant.

"Yer brother, Miss Nora? Sure no, an' he in the West Indies! The West Indies you told me only t'other day. Eh!" he threw up his two hands, "an' it will be a token!"

"What folly!" Bowen cried naturally.

"Disprove it," said Nora. "This is all come to me because I have been over-wise, and have despised the faiths of my forefathers. This is the 3rd of June; when shall we hear from Harry?"

"Eh, Miss Nora, I'd not bother too much. Now, I'm thinking, belike you set eyes on the lad Tom Quine, my sister's son from Port St. Mary; he'll be down at my place this day or two."

"The Quines are fair, and Harry is brown." Nora's manner was conclusive; her faith and her superstitious fears held her. "But let us change the subject; we have a friend here who will believe nothing. Come down, come along quickly."

The path was even enough as they neared the foot of the Glen. But what with windings and with the mass of wild greenery, no one person could keep the whole of the party in sight. Quine told his story to Bowen, and he showed how even up the face of what was bare rock, with holes inhabited, one would suppose, only by conies and such-like nimble folk, in the days of his jovial youth he and "lads" had clambered, and had stowed away, and had made fine profit out of hidden treasures.

"And there is nothing of the sort now?" Most guileless was Bowen's light-hearted manner, as he gave the old man's shoulder a slap of good fellowship.

Quine's face sobered. Nay, it actually grew melancholy.

"Ah, sir! no. They do say as on winter nights a thing or two do happen; but, laws! I'm in bed and asleep then. They daren't venture summer runs now, sir. No, that would be tough work."

"Now, is it not lovely?" Meta exclaimed, running up from her advanced party. "Say our glen is the king of glens, or we'll turn you out of Ballafane!"

"The king? No, the queen of glens with your permission;" and Bowen had his most lively, most charming, most masterly grace about him, taking her cue of light fun. "Could anything so lovely be masculine? I am sure I am right in dubbing Glen Maye feminine; an implied strength veiled by grace and beauty!"

So they ran on. The summer sea, energised out of summer calm by the gale, rolled as the Atlantic only can roll. White sea-horses pranced upon the crest of far-out waves; upon the near ones, diamond sparklets glanced and flashed; above, the blue sky was dashed and swept with white feathery clouds—children of the gale. But

these were scudding away to the north; the wind had changed, and the gale was flying away. Behind—of course every face was turned seawards—rose the fairy greenness of the Glen; the old grey rocks frowned, but the broken ground between them rising up to the land above was full of young green. Ash and rowan-tree, young oak and ancient bramble, all fought for space, and won it. Osmunda was unrolling his big fronds in one damp hollow, a million smaller ferns swayed and feathered the spaces by the mossy flooring and banks; all, too, was gemmed with pale golden primrose patches.

They went on to the margin of the shore, they went to right and left, they picked up broken bits of wreckage, they chattered as young folks do of glad, happy nothings; at last they turned to mount the Glen.

The sun had turned for afternoon, but he was burning high in glory; the mid-day meal at Ballafane would get delayed, for the promise of being home by two o'clock would not be kept.

"Nearly two now!" Alice cried.

"And you may be sure mother knew we should be behind time." Nora was perfectly easy, and provokingly slow.

"Well, you'd better hurry."

"Very well. You go on. I shall be in time for scraps or for pudding."

And then it so fell about that Alice, and Meta, and Denison did go—did go quickly, while Bowen, looking out to sea through Quine's telescope, made a reason for Nora to delay.

Fishing-boats, with their brown sails, were in plenty, swinging at anchor; away in the dim blue distance sailed a big ship; out from under the Mull of Galloway came a smaller craft.

"Eh, sir, she be the Laughing Nancy. She'll be down safe to-night. Ye'll get down, sir?"

"Certainly."

Nora overheard. How strange, thought she, for Quine to use such a familiar manner with their guest, whom he certainly could know scarcely at all.

However, her wonder got no more to feed it, for at Bowen's one word of decisive assent he turned, and Quine with him.

Nora ran forward, over the little plank bridge across the stream of the Glen, then up the swiftly ascending path. Perhaps she did not hear the two following her as quickly as she would have them do; perhaps she would have another look at the bright briskness of the sea-view—no matter what



the "perhaps" might be, the fact stands forth to be recorded that, having mounted some twenty feet or so of pathway, she suddenly swung round.

At the moment, a swish as of a person passing through thick leafage struck a sound on the sweet summer hush. Nora's head turned, and a cry broke from her.

"Harry!"

The rustling sound and her voice came as one thing to Bowen and Quine. They looked up.

And there stood Nora, white, as if she saw a vision, with her hand extended, and pointing to a figure, which, for stillness, might have been a spirit.

A brown young man, rather tall, wearing a rough sailor dress, his face brimming with laughter, stood peering from an upper path.

In a moment, Quine, with his old instinct for battle, had seized Nora. She was his prisoner, he—he had been an out-and-out smuggler in the old days—was fighting for his run. To let such a witness go loose—no! How his keen old eyes gleamed!

"This is bad," was Bowen's remark between set teeth.

"Nora's game! She'll not speak!" came from her ghost—literally and truly her brother Harry in hiding.

"Ah!" was Quine's contemptuous rejoinder. "Clap the lass under lock and key—I know how—till midnight. That's it. Let a woman loose? Not now, my gentlemen. No, no!"

"You are a fool, Quayle."

"Thank you. How was I to know she would turn round, and I had to speak to you?"

"You had nothing of the sort. You are, or ought to be, a log until we'd shipped you on board the *Laughing Nancy*."

"And why?" Nora's question was haughtiness itself, notwithstanding her ignominious position in Quine's clutch. "If Harry is in danger, am I likely to increase his danger? Why are you here? Why is all this?" The fearless glance shot to her brother, and then to the other two men.

"I'm in a deuce of a mess, Nora, and Bowen is getting me out of it. I say, old fellow, would it be swinging for you if they knew you aided and abetted the—the retirement from his country of your humble servant?"

Reckless Harry Quayle!

In the days of "long ago," hanging was

a common punishment; Quayle had done that which would have hung him. The history must go into one sentence, so to speak.

He had met Bowen when his ship was at the Bermudas; he had been wild and reckless all his life, and some slight matter at this moment made him determine to let his ship sail without him. So far, so bad. Bowen was coming to England, and taking a fancy to Quayle, thought that as the young man was bent madly upon getting to London, if he went by the same ship he would keep some control over him. This he did; perhaps the degree of control was too small to be of permanent good.

But does not everyone know some instance of scampishness in which the scamp is a fellow who makes friends everywhere, and not only this, but who makes friends who will sacrifice themselves for him? This was the case between Quayle and Bowen.

The deed was done, so there is no good in enlarging upon it here. Harry Quayle had dashed beyond bounds in London, he had—it was "long ago," mind!—done that which would land him on the gallows.

And Bowen would save him.

The only way to do this was to spirit him away, and out of the country. Quayle was Manx, and that suggested the smuggling capabilities of the coast of Man as a means for the end.

This was said, in fewer words than we have given, at the Glen's Foot to Nora by Bowen.

"And if you, a stranger, can risk what you do for him, shall I, his sister, do less?"

"You shame me."

"Yes; I really do think you might have credited me with less mean-spiritedness than you seem to do!" Nora tossed her head; perhaps she would make a show of offence to hide a deeper feeling.

The upshot was that Nora ran home as quickly as she could, and—she could act, it seems, better than many women—the household at Ballafane slipped through the doings of that day, believing that its guest was studying Manx lore, and seeing Manx coast-scenery, under the tutelage of old Quine.

When Nora saw their visitor in the morning, she knew her brother was safe. The *Laughing Nancy* had made for the Glen; had shipped a passenger; perhaps had landed a keg or so for Quine's private solace, and had sailed away.

She was bound for America, but the

Laughing Nancy did not always ublish her real destination.

In less than a week after, Bowen left Ballafane and the Isle of Man.

### CHAPTER III.

BALLAFANE was a different place, after all this had happened. At least, we pick one out of the household, and by giving this opinion, speak as her heart would have spoken.

Her tongue said no such thing, but then it is an acknowledged truism that tongues and hearts are not always speaking the same language. One point was, that Harry and Nora Quayle had from babyhood paired together; he was volatile, she was reliable, though in many a mad frolic she had been as wild as he, and consequently for her to bear alone the knowledge of his fault, and of his flight, set a strain upon her such as no young girl could bear without shrinking.

She told herself this was the whole of her care. She may have been true in this, but then, why was there never a thought of missing Harry, without a companion thought of the brave friend who had saved him? She said nothing to herself about these second thoughts; but who does not know how powerful second thoughts are? She, however, went on her way, wishing and wishing for news of Harry, so that, at least, she and the household might speak his name with some sort of common knowledge of his doings.

So strong and fearless a girl might surely have fought her fight against old-world superstition! One might have supposed so, but Nora Quayle's common-sense paled before the evil that she knew had come. How, now, could she deny the possibility of ill-luck being in the power of fairies, or witches, or—she knew not what?

Midsummer Eve came, and she led Meta—rather than was led by her—in the old games they had been used to follow. Now it was no "game," for the girl was weakened—terribly weakened in spirit, though she might talk in her wild way. Was she not always telling herself that the May Day had scarcely gone when Meta had tossed away her cross of rowan-twigs, before Ballafane's first woe had come? Harry in flight for dear life, and the stranger had come within its walls—she alone knowing, now, why that stranger had come. Surely, then, on Midsummer Eve, no contempt

should be shown to spirit or fay, good or evil genius!

She saw that the twigs and gorse were well piled for the watch-fires on the low hills between the house and the coast; aye! they should blaze well, as the summer night fell, and should ward off the spirit-folk in the darkness! What armfuls of marigolds, too, did she and Meta gather, and strew along every pathway of the Ballafane grounds—what would she care for the ridicule of fifty Johnny Denisons, or fifty Alices? Be it wisdom or folly, no evil chance should befall her house through her!

Midsummer, however, came and passed by without any change whatever.

Many weeks went by beyond that, before anything could be said to happen. There was a little gaiety about Tynwald time, but that was an annual matter; and as the girls grew older, and more accustomed to the thing, each year lessened the excitement of it.

In August, Alice and Johnny Denison were married, and, after a wedding-tour in England, settled down near Ramsay, where the young man practised as a solicitor, looking forward, of course, to the future, when he might be holding office under the Manx government.

At last, as the year was dying, news came from Harry. He was at Valparaiso, he had done with the sea; he was then, when he wrote, going up country for a Spanish company. "A jolly life," he said. But when he could write again was quite vague; he could only say he would send a letter, if such a matter were possible to him.

Thereupon Nora roused herself, and told herself that all things were well, and that no more need she endure that miserable weight of silence. She talked of Harry all day long.

When spring was round again, Ballafane was hurried out of its gentle pleasant routine. Another wedding came upon it in a hurry, for Meta had captivated the heart of a young lieutenant from Castletown, and, as the detachment doing garrison-duty there had just completed its term of service in the island, Meta must be married at once, and go away with her soldier-husband.

Such a skirmish as there was getting the trousseau ready! Meta was going to live in England—what a long way from home! So one used to look upon such a matter "long ago."

June was over. Meta was married and

gone; Nora was the only child of Ballafane at home. What wonder if she did now and again think a bit over the deeds of the past year? What wonder, too, if, out of all the old haunts, a ramble down Glen Maye, and a talk with old Peter Quine, should be one the girl most easily and most often fell into?

Ballafane looked empty; the big, straggling, delightfully unkempt grounds grew eerie, even in the summer-time; and when Tynwald Day came round again, instead of fancying she did not care to go and see the quaint reproduction of the ancient gathering, Nora declared the drive to be "a necessity."

So she and her father and mother drove over to St. John's, as they had done almost every year since Nora could remember anything.

Of course all the notables of Man were to be seen there.

A flashing thunder-shower burst upon the Ballafane party as they drove along; a very tempest of water poured down upon them; then, in as extreme a manner, did a stiff wind rise, and blow away the storm-clouds, and herald in the sunshine. After that, such a day of glorious sunlight had not shone the summer through. July is hot everywhere, but the heat on that Tynwald Day was a thing to be remembered.

How the scarlet uniforms, and the burnished arms of the soldiers who kept the ground, flashed in the sun. How gay were the new summer costumes! How the white and the light-hued muslins fluttered, as the fashion of Man walked, and strolled, and talked.

Naturally, Mr. Quayle had gone into the church for the service which opens the annual ceremony; but his wife and daughter would stay outside, the heat and crowd were so great. In consequence of which separation the two ladies met with a great surprise.

What was it?

They stood with some friends on the Tynwald Hill, watching as the procession filed out from the church-door. Police to clear the way, then the clergy of the island, then the members of the House of Keys, then the high officials of governments, deemsters, and so on; last the Governor. For how many hundreds of years has the thing been done?

Many friends were recognised, of course, by the party the Quayles had joined. First one and then another spoke and nodded, as they mounted the green steps and took

their places under the tented covering of the tiny hill.

It was all just as it had been to Nora so many times.

Then the Governor came, hat in hand, and the rustle of preparation began.

Still it was the same as it had always been.

Then a new thing came, and nothing was as it had been of old.

"Where have the Denisons gone?" asked a friend.

"Don't you see them?—there is Alice, talking to papa. Dear!" Nora's closing exclamation was hushed.

"And I have been wondering where Mr. Quayle was, too!" the first speaker went on. "When did he come up?"

"If you had seen the Governor mount the first step, you would have seen Quayle," laughed the father of the girl. "Your eyes have been wandering."

"They have," and she gaily tossed her fair head—"wandering in search of Alice Denison, because I must speak to her."

"Nora, my dear, do you know who your father's friend is? I am sure I have seen his face before—who is he? He drove up in the Governor's carriage—what uniform does he wear?"

"I don't know." Nora's answer was a gasp. The words could go for an answer to the last question—she knew perfectly well who the stranger was.

He was Harry's friend, Mr. Bowen.

All at once the thought flashed upon her of how little they knew of him. Not one word had he said to show he knew a soul in Man, and now?—he was evidently in the Governor's train; he was surely his guest; he was, perhaps, even a member of his family.

Nora's start of surprise when she saw him was over; her trembling at the moment of being questioned about him was mastered, for, in one flashing vision, she had learnt two things.

One was that the stranger was more to her than any other being in the universe; the other, that if he be of noble rank she must forget him. She was Manx, of gentle Manx blood, but was there not a great gulf between her rank and that of the family to which the Governor belonged?

But Bowen was not the family name. Nora's mind caught at so many things at once. There is many a crisis which a moment of time may cover, and yet we who have gone through such a moment,

do we not marvel afterwards to think of the crowd of matters which rushed through our mind while it was so swiftly passing? So with Nora.

But the moment had gone, and she heard her friend, Mr. Corrin, saying to himself:

"And yet I am sure I have seen him——"

"Of course you have;" and Nora dashed in her answer in her gayest manner. "He is a friend of Harry's." To the world she would acknowledge no shame in the naming her brother's name. "He stayed with us last year; he——"

"I remember."

"And I remember, too;" and a quiet, mocking, gay emphasis was set upon her words by Mona Corrin.

Whereat Nora blushed fiery red. A girl would inevitably guess the meaning of her friend's emphasis.

"But now he is with——"

Nora would listen to no more, but, regardless of the weighty matters going on just above her head in the Manx reading of the laws, she slipped between her friends and made for her father.

Why should she not openly speak to such a friend as Bowen? Why not, indeed?

But she was face to face with him, and then—she never could tell how such a reasoning mastered her, but she did all at once shrink—for in a flash she saw, not Bowen, the easy-going friend of her ultra-easy brother, but an English stranger, a guest of the Governor's.

Fearless Nora Quayle did not shrink from awe at this new aspect of affairs, but she did hold herself erect in pride.

Bowen's greeting was on this wise:

"Mr. Quayle says you never had my letter this morning. I only arrived last night, and they told me the post would catch you this morning."

"They told you wrongly, then," cried Nora. "We are far too early birds to be caught by such a lagging post. Why did you not write before?"

Bowen's open face clouded. He saw a cloud on Nora's.

"I thought I would surprise you, but it was foolish——"

"I thought Ballafane was the only house in Man you knew?"

Surely Nora was trying to make the most of her pride.

"It was. Now, for one night, I have made acquaintance with another house. X's (the Governor's) wife is my cousin. I

was only enlightening them this morning upon the subject of my—my erratic plunge into the island last year."

Gravely, steadily, and with meaning, did he gaze into Nora's eyes.

The secret was their secret alone.

And the droning of the Manx reading went on under the tent above, and the sun blazed on the thousands of spectators, and in the distance moved the many-coloured masses of gay folks. Out of it all, two people came by-and-by to stand and talk together.

What did they talk about?

Not only, surely, of the wild brother; not only of the new phase in which Bowen was showing himself. Oh no! That last matter had to be spoken of, but, as Bowen himself said:

"Was it a man's fault if his father bore a title? Was a fellow less a man for that? Was it a crime, also, to be an only son, and to be compelled one day to bear that same title oneself?"

Nora was obliged to laugh away her would-be stiffness.

"I believe you only half forgive me this cruelty of fate."

"I liked better to remember Harry's friend."

"But Harry knew the melancholy fact. If he kept his friend notwithstanding, will not you, Miss Quayle?"

There was something in the tone which made Nora answer:

"I have a great mind to say 'No!'"

We will not say anything further. There are some conversations which lose all their pith from being repeated. This that followed would be of such a sort, not being intended for more than one pair of ears to hear.

Ballafane was not neglected by the mysterious stranger. Very oddly, when he rode over on the morning following that Tynwald Day, he came with a bright, masterful bearing. Nora went down the circling drive to meet him with glad, welcoming eyes.

Before the summer went, the whole of the island—Man is but small at best—was talking of the great marriage at Ballafane. One day, when the old lord should die, Nora would be Lady Hervey, of Brachill.

As for Harry Quayle, he passed from all knowledge of kith or kin. Whether he died fever-stricken, or whether he led an adventurous, buccaneering life, no man would ever know.

## POSTE RESTANTE, VENICE.

"POSTE RESTANTE, VENICE," so, 'tis duly noted ;  
I'll write you how the old man fares, my boy.  
See Venice and then die—that's wrongly quoted—  
See Naples, isn't it? Yet, youth and joy,  
And that fair Adriatic Queen, and spring,  
What richer gifts has pleasure left to bring?

Better than our east winds and snowdrifts—eh?  
Nay, lad, my travelling's done; I'm well enough,  
And I and my old dog have had our day,  
Aye, and see life before us yet. Hi, Ruff!  
How about striding through the morning dew,  
Over the Highclose turnips, I and you?

Venice and April! Venice, hope, and love,  
All the old golden memories of the past.  
There was a snowy-breasted rose-beaked dove,  
I watched at breakfast when I stood there last,  
Below St. Mark's, in the great glittering square;  
I used to think they'd make a pretty pair,

The pigeon, and the girl I dreamt to take,  
Through those fair foreign lands, a happy bride;  
'Tis your turn now such sunny webs to make,  
And watch them tear or tangle at your side.  
Well, fill it high, the cup of hope and mirth,  
I say so; all it costs is scarce its worth.

"Poste Restante." Evil-omened words, a chance;  
An idle clerk, a slight word read amiss,  
Some trick of what we men call, circumstance,  
Dashed to the ground my first—last draught of  
bliss.

You've set me recollecting it—so take  
A story of a wreck a slip can make.

We'd parted in the heyday of our youth,  
About some folly—I almost forget,  
What was our cause of quarrel now in sooth;  
What sowed the seed of two lives' long regret;  
Some rosebud that she would not give, or gave—  
They bloom for anyone upon her grave!

Two fond young fools, hot-headed and hot-  
hearted,  
Making a half charm of a passionate sorrow;  
With some hushed voice that whispered as we  
parted,

Of reconciliation waiting on the morrow.  
For India I; for balls and London she;  
Lord! that such trifling with the truth should be!

A sullen week of anger and of pride,  
And then I wrote, reproaches and repentance;  
"A word would call me—call me to her side  
To hear from her sweet lips my lifelong  
sentence;

Forget—forgive—it was not yet too late;  
'Poste Restante, Venice'—there I'd meet my fate."

And there I waited, longing, chafing, pining,  
"No letters," hearing always, morn and eve.  
How long I struggled ere my hopes resigning,  
How loth I was my lingering faith to leave,  
I can't remember now; it seemed a life,  
Ere I sank, worsted, in the bitter strife.

And as the great ship thundered to the East,  
I know it bore as desperate a man  
As ever thought the light of life had ceased  
For earth—but it is strange how much one  
can

Live through in youth, and yet to-night I swear,  
I almost feel the pangs I suffered there.

A soldier learns to fly and fight again,  
With weapons all the keener for the fray;  
A dozen summers passed of mingled strain,  
And worn and bronzed, I trod the well-known  
way

To the Poste Restante, Venice—word might come  
To greet the wanderer on his passage home.

And carelessly the letters found I took,  
And carelessly glanced at them—then as one,  
Who casting on some flowers a passing look,  
Sees a coiled adder glistening in the sun,  
And starts and shudders—so amid the rest,  
Yellow and torn, I saw, to me addressed,  
A letter—hers, the old fair graceful scroll,  
A little tremulous, perhaps—but hers;  
I tell you, boy, e'en now through heart and soul  
A thrill of cruel memory wakes and stirs,  
Recalling how, like one by sunstroke smitten  
I stood, and read the words my love had written.

My darling, my lost darling, the sweet line,  
The soft forgiveness, and the bashful plea,  
The woman's tender, "All the fault was mine,"  
The frank surrender, "Only come to me."  
Too late, too late! I read it through, my lad,  
I stood and read it; and I was not mad.

Not then—nor when, the headlong journey past—  
Oh, weary stretching leagues of land and wave!  
I gained her home—her darkened home—at last,  
And knew my quest was over—at her grave.  
I thought she might be changed, or might be wed,  
I never thought that I could find her—dead!

But she had drooped, my darling, drooped and  
died,

Not by my fault, perchance—I cannot tell,  
But thinking that her pardon was denied,  
By me—by me. And we who loved so well,  
Never made peace on earth, and time is long;  
Some day, God willing, o'er the olden wrong,

We two may smile in heaven! Well, 'tis over,  
You've heard my story, take to heart my moral,  
Nor in the folly of a happy lover  
Provoke the risk of true love's "lightest quarrel."  
Life's bitterest pang is vain remorse of Love's.  
Think of me, when you feed those Venice doves!

## PURVIS'S EXPERIMENT.

## I.

"I CANNOT imagine, if, as you say, all  
you want is to get out of the way of the  
March winds, and within reach of a little  
fishing and sketching, why you don't go to  
Aberafon. The place is lovely; the house  
a very fair one—good, plain fare, and  
plenty of it, and Mrs. Roberts the most com-  
fortable person in the world. If you really  
mean what you say, and have not written  
for the sake of writing merely, you will  
take my advice and seriously turn your  
thoughts to Aberafon."

Having read thus far, the young man to  
whom this letter was addressed put it  
down and meditated. The result of  
his meditations may be briefly summed  
up as this—that having once asked the  
opinion of the lady who wrote it, that  
lady being a maiden aunt of a decided,  
not to say arbitrary disposition, and having  
for once been so fortunate as to express an  
inclination towards a line of conduct which  
met with her approbation, the best thing  
he could do was to take her advice. He  
did not know Aberafon, but it was none

the worse for that. Everybody who did know it raved about it, and he was fond of breaking fresh ground. Besides, if he did not like it, he could leave it. He would go.

He was a young man, three or four and thirty at the outside, fairly well off, and with nobody to please but himself. He had been called to the bar, and kept up the look of the thing by living in chambers when he was in town, but he had had no personal experience of briefs, and had never done a day's hard work in his life. He had a pretty taste for painting, but he was erratic, and sometimes never touched a brush from week's end to week's end; and he was fond of shooting and fishing, and excelled in them both. But then one cannot spend one's life shooting and fishing—not in civilised society, at any rate, and Hugh Purvis had no fancy for the backwoods. It was rather an empty, unsatisfactory sort of life, when you came to analyse it, but he was a pleasant, good-natured fellow, whom men liked as a rule, and women invariably, and he found the world not bad to live in. But this last year he had been very near going out of it with an affection of the lungs, and hence the present idea of escaping the east winds.

"If I really mean what I say! What a suspicious old soul it is!" he said to himself with a laugh, as he consigned the letter to the waste-paper basket, and proceeded, there and then, to answer it.

"If I don't write at once, I may change my mind," he reflected. "And what is the good of it? The place will do me well enough, and there will be at least one person satisfied!"

This explains how, when Lady Cricklewood and her cousin and companion, Barbara Fleming, came to stay at Aberafon, so long before the season as to ensure them the prospect of the greatest possible privacy, they found, putting out of the question an occasional bird of passage, a solitary representative of the male sex already in possession of the hotel. It is not by any means a bad hotel, though Aberafon is so small a place; indeed, it may almost be said that the hotel constitutes the place; the rectory and a few scattered cottages comprise the rest of it, so far as human habitations are concerned. It is a long, low, white house, which has been added to from time to time, but never to the detriment of a certain homely beauty which extends to the interior. It is wonderful how it seems to spread away

in every direction from the entrance, which might, for its unpretentiousness, be that of a cottage—what a number of ups and downs, and passages, and pretty, cosy, unconventional-looking sitting-rooms one comes upon. It is easy to get fond of the house—nestling, as it were, amongst the mountains, with the sunny bay, dotted with islets, lying smiling before it, and with nine miles of sparsely-populated country stretching between it and the rush and roar of the railroad.

"In the summer it must be perfect," Mrs. Fleming remarked, as she stood at the bedroom-window, on the day of their arrival, and looked out.

"It would be perfect but for the people," assented the older lady. "I can't stand the people. The house is alive with them—crammed full—so that you can't get a corner to yourself. They run cars every day to meet the trains—twice a day, unless I am mistaken, and there is neither pleasure nor peace left in the place."

"But the table d'hôte? I should think the table d'hôte was amusing?"

"If you could see without being seen, and listen without being spoken to, it might be. I am getting old, and I like quiet; and I don't care to be forced either into friendliness or incivility. I shall never go anywhere in the 'season,' as it is called, again."

The old lady—she was very close upon seventy—a handsome, stately old woman, with a fine face and dignified carriage, spoke in a clear voice and with decision, as one who knew her own mind. They had been in the house a couple of hours or so, and had just finished their preparations for dinner, and were going down. As Mrs. Fleming offered her arm, she glanced with a slight shade of annoyance at the rich black brocade and delicate ruffles, which contrasted in a somewhat marked manner with the severe simplicity of the morning-dress she herself wore.

"I had no idea you were going to dress," she said, "when there was nobody to dress for."

"I beg your pardon, my dear," Lady Cricklewood said quietly. "There was you!"

"Oh, well, of course, if you like to put it in that way, I have been guilty of a great omission, which I can only beg of you to excuse;" and the colour rose into the other's pale cheeks. They were very pale, and her eyes and eyebrows were very dark, which gave her, without any positive

beauty, a somewhat striking appearance. She had, too, a graceful figure, and a way of carrying herself which was apt to attract attention, and Purvis, who had already obeyed the gong, found himself glancing across from the table he shared with a couple of men, who were staying the night at the hotel, to that appropriated by the two ladies, with a lively curiosity.

It led him afterwards into the hall, and to the visitors'-book, which gratified it more than he expected, for one of the two names was not unfamiliar to him.

"Lady Cricklewood, by all that's wonderful!" he exclaimed, and whistled. "Who is it she has with her, I wonder? It can't be that girl, for I can see she is a 'Mrs.' A friend, possibly; she doesn't look like a sub."

He left the book, and seeing the landlady in the little bar-parlour opposite, entered into conversation with her. She knew Lady Cricklewood very well, she said; she had been there for some time in the season, and had promised to come again, as she had come now, when the house should be less full. She did not care for a crowd; the people liked her, for she made herself pleasant to them, when they were there and not to be escaped; but she grumbled behind their backs, and wished the place were ten times as remote as it was. No; the other lady had not been there before. She was quite the lady to look at; did not Mr. Purvis think so? She had not made sure, as yet, which she was—friend or companion. The lady who had filled the latter post in the summer—Miss Chavasse—was not here, and the maid had intimated that Mrs. Fleming had come in her stead; but it would appear that it was only a holiday Miss Chavasse was taking, and so it seemed scarcely likely the other was more than a friend, did it?

Scarcely, Purvis assented. He rather hoped, so far as it was likely to concern him at all, that she was not. He never knew what to do with people in that position. If they only appeared oblivious of it themselves, he did not mind, but then they so seldom did, and the awkwardness was contagious. He had been at Aberafon a week, and was getting a trifle tired of it. The days were well enough, for the weather was beautiful, and he managed to amuse himself very well in the bay, and on the little river. There were the fishing and sketching he had talked about, and there was a little wild-fowl shooting into the bargain. He did not

mind the solitude as much as most men might have done. What he did mind was the unsocial, unaccompanied evening; and the evenings are still long in March. Now and then somebody turned up, as had been the case to-night, but it was not the rule for anybody to do so towards whom the Londoner, town-bred, and a little fastidious, felt drawn. It was a pity there was not a billiard-table; there was a thing as big as a bagatelle-board, certainly, but it simply served to remind one of the goods one had not. And there were books—books of all sorts, such as you do not look for in an hotel—for there had ever been an ambition on the part of its proprietor to make something more than an hotel, in the ordinary sense of the term, of Aberafon; but Purvis had not been accustomed to find his society in books.

And there would be nobody else coming to stay, so the landlord feared, for another fortnight or three weeks!

He had half a mind to cultivate Lady Cricklewood. He would not attempt it to-night. He would leave them to recover themselves after their journey, not but what they looked fit enough, both of them; but possibly to-morrow. It would be rather a joke to tell little Mrs. Seaton Smith, the next time he saw her, that he had made friends with her formidable aunt, the stern old lady who had disowned her, after adopting her and naming her as her heiress, because she had insisted upon keeping her troth to the man of her choice, after his extravagance had forced him to sell out, and had so practically ruined him.

"Plucky thing of her, poor little woman! when she had only the three hundred a year her father had left her to marry upon, and there seemed as little chance of his coming in for the adjutantcy he has now as of my becoming Lord Chancellor, and just as much of his turning over a new leaf and keeping his hand out of his pocket! 'A bit of a miser,' she called him the other day! I imagine that comes of what people who talk fine would call the alchemy of love," he added to himself, with something between a sigh and a sneer. He knew the Seaton Smiths very well, and was a pretty frequent visitor at their little house on the Surrey side. It was only natural, seeing that his friendship with the husband dated from their school-days at Harrow; the wife he had only known since her marriage, when he had conceived a great admiration for her conduct, and a

proportionate pity for its consequences. She was so young, and pretty, and gentle, and had shown such a splendid, unselfish loyalty to love, that it had been impossible to look at her, without feeling a supreme indignation against Lady Cricklewood.

She might have withstood her to the last moment, for her own sake; but surely after the offence was committed, it might have been condoned—which may have been bad reasoning enough, but at any rate was Mr. Purvis's.

And now they had six children on an income of as many hundreds a year, or a trifle less, and the pretty face was thinner and less rosy, and the little house not quite so smart and trim as when Hugh first knew them both; but nothing was ever said of Aunt Katharine or of the old days when she, Mrs. Seaton Smith, was known everywhere, not merely as Nellie Palmer, but as Lady Cricklewood's heiress.

Hugh Purvis could in no wise get her out of his head, as he sat that first night in solitary possession of the smoking-room at Aberafon. By-and-by, the two strangers who had dined at the table d'hôte lounged in, and entered into conversation, and so, somehow, the evening wore to an end. But even in his sleep the young man was troubled with the phantoms, as it were, of the story of which he had been reminded, and amongst them, crossing those of the stately old lady and her fair, soft-featured niece, the shadowy outline of a third woman—the woman who had influenced the one and supplanted the other, and who, by-and-by, in his dream, turned full upon him the dark eyes he had met more than once, that day, at dinner.

## II.

"Certainly, my dear; if Mr. Purvis is good enough to offer to take you, and you are inclined to go—why not? I have not, I hope, arrived at that state of dotage, in which it is out of the question that one should be left to one's own resources for half an hour at a time."

It was the second day of Hugh's acquaintance with his fellow inmates, the third of their sojourn at Aberafon. He had bethought himself of a mutual acquaintance in town, and had made use of it with that ease of manner and ready self-adaptation to any society in which he might find himself, which were among his characteristics. The old lady, satisfied as

to his position, and not loth to have a second person to speak to, received him graciously; Mrs. Fleming, on the contrary, seemed a little shy and "stand off," a state of affairs at which the young man did not know whether to be piqued or pleased. He looked at her rather harder, and talked for her, though to her companion, on the strength of it. Not any the less because he was a man to whom all women were much of a muchness, did he desire that he should be liked and admired, up to a certain point, by them.

He had spent the previous evening in the drawing-room, chatting away to the best of his ability, and rather interested in drawing my lady out. She was a clever old woman, he found, full of information, and eager to add to it. Of course, she was a red-hot politician, after the manner of her sex and age, and Purvis was privately thankful that their views were sufficiently akin to avert a collision. An old lady who had not much sympathy with fashionable gossip or fashionable life, it seemed to him, and who had no notion of letting herself be carried away by the current, so long as there was any life in her to resist it.

He got a clearer idea of her, after that first evening, than of Mrs. Fleming, who worked monotonously away at a mass of white wool bundled up in a handkerchief, and only put in a word now and then. During a part of the time she appeared not to be listening at all; then, suddenly, she woke from her abstraction, and asked the old lady abruptly—as if remembering all at once something she ought not to have forgotten—whether she would like her game of *béziq*ue.

Lady Cricklewood glanced at the time-piece, and shook her head.

"I did not know it was so late," she said, running the needles into her knitting as she spoke. "You have made the time pass very pleasantly, Mr. Purvis. It is nice to meet with anybody who can talk, and will take the trouble to do it to an old woman." A speech which had sent Hugh to bed, very well pleased with himself.

He had had his breakfast, and was off and away up the river before they appeared next morning, and it was within an hour of dinner when he suggested taking Mrs. Fleming to see the sunset from the flag-staff. She had not seemed to care about going until Lady Cricklewood spoke; but she rose then with a certain alacrity, and contenting herself with throwing a shawl



of the latter's over her head and shoulders, accepted his escort graciously enough. It was very steep up the garden-path at the back of the house, and Hugh could not help observing how much more easy the ascent appeared to her than to himself. The real youth and vigour of the woman seemed to come out in the open air; a soft colour mounted into her cheeks, her eyes brightened, her voice took a certain animation it had been wanting in indoors.

"This is beautiful!" she exclaimed in a hushed voice, as, the summit gained, they stood and looked down over the house, across the bay, more than half environed by the mountains, behind which the sun was setting in a crimson and golden glory.

"Yes," Purvis said quietly; "I think you would have to go a long way to find any effect more lovely. I don't know whether anything in these latitudes can really come up to the splendour of an Eastern sunset; but, short of that, I should think this could scarcely be excelled. I suppose I am talking like a fool, too—in Switzerland, for example, it must be grander."

"I suppose so," she said. "I have had no opportunity of judging. I have been abroad scarcely at all. Once it was the great wish of my life to go, but one grows out of one's wishes, as one does out of other things."

"Out of some and into others. There are not many amongst us who stand quite still, I imagine," he remarked with a smile.

"No; but it is something to have enough interest left in life to wish for anything," was the reply. "See how rapidly the sky changes, and the tints get colder. It will all be one dull, uniform grey directly, with none of the beauty left. There is something sad about the sunset, I always think, no matter how lovely it may be."

"We have to thank the poets for that, I imagine," Purvis rejoined briefly.

He was afraid she was disposed to be sentimental, and anything that approached the sentimental he abhorred. She may have taken the hint, for she hastened to give the conversation a more practical turn—catechising him about the neighbourhood, the walks, drives, and so forth; and by-and-by she discovered that it was getting chilly, and turned her face homewards. He was longing to know more about her; to arrive at the fact whether

or not her face had any business in that connection, in which it had haunted his sleep; whether, in short, she was the woman who had acted the part of an evil genius towards his friend's wife.

"She was young, and she was a relation," he said to himself. "And she sneaked her way into the old lady's favour, and pretended to be doing her best to soften her all the time. It goes for nothing that she is married—she might have married twice over in these eight or nine years; but she would not give one the idea of a hypocrite or a toady—neither one nor the other. You are not thinking of making a long stay!" he ventured, as they walked back.

"I? Oh no," she said, regarding him with some surprise. "A fortnight, or three weeks at most. I can't say how long Lady Cricklewood will stay—a good deal longer, if the place suits her, and does not fill too fast."

Purvis breathed a little more freely. His first conjecture had been the correct one. She was not a "sub." He was ashamed of himself, as he put out another "feeler," but his curiosity was too strong for him.

"She will find it rather slow here by herself, won't she?" he suggested.

"Oh, she won't be by herself," Mrs. Fleming replied coldly. "She never is."

There was not much to be got out of her, it was evident. It might be easier to arrive at what he wanted to know through the old lady herself. What good the knowledge would do him he would have been at a loss to say. He might find out fast enough by writing to Seaton Smith; but he felt no inclination to do anything of the sort. He saw no good in reminding people of their grievances, and that Lady Cricklewood's conduct was a grievance there could be no denying. He would bide his time. Sooner or later, something would be let drop, and he should know for certain whether the traitress still held possession of the camp.

They all dined that evening, and indeed every evening thereafter, at the same table; and every evening, too, for the succeeding three or four, they played cards in company. Sometimes it was a game as unpopular with Purvis as with most men—dummy whist; he let my lady take dummy, and derived a certain amusement himself from the interest and self-complacency she exhibited; but more frequently he played bézique with her, whilst Mrs. Fleming sat and worked, or made a pretence of working

at an adjacent table. Hugh caught himself smiling more than once at the sort of tame-cat existence into which he seemed to be falling; but, after all, it was better than knocking about the billiard-balls by himself, and the weather at Aberafon was milder than it was anywhere else, and he might have been as sound as he was ten years ago for any unpleasant reminder to the contrary.

Lady Cricklewood was in a very good temper, and very happy. She thought Hugh a perfectly well-bred young man, which was natural, and she found Barbara Fleming more to her mind as a companion than the person who served her in that capacity professionally, which was natural, too. For though Barbara had been in ways a disappointment to her, still she was dear to her in a degree, if only as her cousin, and as the sharer of all her confidences at one time of her life. For none the less because Hugh Purvis was not clever enough to arrive at it, had the pale face with the dark eyes taken its proper place in his dreams; none the less was this the woman who had stepped into pretty Miss Nellie's shoes at Cricklewood.

She was well off now, judged by the ordinary standard, and quite independent of her relative, thanks in a measure to that lady's liberality. She had, in fact, married to the latter's satisfaction, and had been rewarded by a nice little settlement, and the prospect of a great deal more. And she had not been called upon to do violence to her own inclinations. She had really loved the man; the misery that had come of her marriage—for misery had come of it—had resulted from his infidelity to her. She had borne with it until she could bear with it no longer; so long as her boy lived—the boy who was to be heir to all the wealth—she faced all sorts of injury and insult for his sake; but, that tie once broken, she cut the other links asunder with a firm hand.

There was a judicial separation, and to all intents and purposes—save that of marriage—she was a free woman. A free woman, with nothing and nobody to live for! That, at least, was the way in which she put it to herself. She had been a clever, unscrupulous girl, who saw no harm in furthering her own interests at the expense of her cousin, and the trials and troubles which had followed upon her success had hardened instead of softening her. When, as would occasionally happen in some indirect way, she heard of Nellie, struggling

indeed with something not very remote from poverty, but still happy and blessed as she herself had never been in the love of a husband and children, and when her thoughts reverted thence to the lonely hearth and the little grave—the only outcome of her own married life—her heart cried out against her fate with an exceeding bitterness.

The death of the child had meant so much to her. It had left her with the sense strong upon her of an unpaid obligation to the kinswoman who had been so good to her. Lady Cricklewood had looked to her for an heir, and she had given her one; but now Basil was dead—gone in his infancy to claim a better inheritance—and it seemed as though her part in the compact had failed.

Morbid and unreasonable as the impression was, it took all the pleasure out of her intercourse with the old lady, and it was nothing but a sense of duty which had brought her now in the latter's train to Aberafon. The perfect quiet of the place, which made its charm to the other, tortured Mrs. Fleming, to whom it afforded a fatal facility for eating her heart out, and Time, for her, moved on leaden wings.

### III.

"He is a fine, sturdy, little chap, and the old woman is so proud of him," Purvis said one day as he sat on the sill of one of the drawing-room windows, and watched Master Robert Roberts, aged six years, in earnest conversation with a couple of boatmen on the little landing-stage in front of the hotel. "There could not be more fuss made over that brat in a certain way if he were the heir-apparent to a dukedom."

"Well," Lady Cricklewood retorted from her seat by the fire, "and why not? He is just as much to his grandmother as if he were heir to twenty. I only wish I had a grandson, and you should see what I would do with him."

"I should like to see, Lady Cricklewood. Grandmothers are proverbially weaker-minded than mothers even. The chances are that you are spared a heavy responsibility."

"I am fond of children," the old lady observed seriously. "I suppose that is why I never had any. Besides, you see, I could have provided for them, so it was scarcely to be expected I should get them; was it? This is a very tiresome, contrary sort of world, Mr. Purvis. We all dip

our hands into the lucky bag, and some of us draw prizes, but very few of us the ones we covet."

"We are greedy, I am afraid," laughed Hugh. "We don't get what we want, but we should not see giving up one thing for another, when it came to the push. We should make a hard fight to keep both. Now when you dipped—to use your own illustration—you drew—what shall we say, Lady Cricklewood?—wealth and position, whereas you would rather——"

"I did not say rather," the old lady interposed quickly. "That which would have been a blessing with money would have been none without. I am, I suppose, what you would call greedy. I have had my fair share of the good things of this life; but I am a lonely old woman, Mr. Purvis, and I have met with a vast deal of ingratitude."

"Everybody does that," Hugh replied awkwardly.

The thought that he was about to be made the recipient of her version of the Seaton Smith story made him a little nervous, for how was he to listen and not speak? And she would think it small of him, it might be, not to have confessed to his friendship. But he need not have concerned himself. Whether she had wiped Nellie Palmer's name quite out of the tablets of her memory, he could not tell; but she talked only generalities, until, suddenly missing Mrs. Fleming, who had slipped away some time previously, she began telling him about the child.

"That was my last disappointment," she said. "I don't know that it was the worst, but it was final. Cricklewood is mine—bought back with my money—and as Sir Robert was the last of the line, I should have liked it to pass to my own flesh and blood; but now when I die it must come to the hammer, and I shall take refuge in that posthumous charity which I once heard a great Catholic preacher run down as the poorest charity of all. And he was quite right," she added.

"But I don't quite see. You must pardon me, but the topic was not of my introducing," ventured Purvis. "I don't quite see; if to Mrs. Fleming's son, why not to Mrs. Fleming herself?"

"She does not want it, she has enough, and it wouldn't make her any happier. Besides, she has scruples, and she would rather not. It was said at one time that she had schemed to get it—that is the fact.

She never did anything of the kind, but she is a proud woman, and I believe her when she says she would rather be without it. And it is a different thing. Had the boy lived and taken the name, and married, and had children, it would have been all right."

"I see," said Purvis, and indeed he felt that at last his eyes were opened, and he did see. And it seemed such a pity, just as he was beginning to get on with Mrs. Fleming, and to take an interest in her, that she should be the traitress, after all! It was silly of the Seaton Smiths, he began to think, not to try and get round the old lady. They ought to do it for the sake of the children. There were circumstances, under which it became a duty to put one's pride in one's pocket. He should get no thanks were he to take it upon himself to write and give this friendly counsel to his old chum—he knew him too well; but it was aggravating to stay and watch this woman playing the part of dog in the manger, without raising a finger to prevent her. The thought of it worried him long after the conversation had come to an end, and as Mrs. Fleming moved about the room that evening, whilst he chatted lazily to Lady Cricklewood, he fancied he detected in her a sort of feline grace he had failed to discover hitherto.

It was evident the old lady really did care for children for their own sakes, and not merely as the possible transmitters of titles and fortunes. She took to noticing Robert Roberts, and it was pretty to see them together; at least, it would have been pretty to anybody whom the sight did not fill, as it filled Purvis, with a secret irritation. There was another little boy—a much nicer, and handsomer, and more refined little boy, who had a right to sit at Lady Cricklewood's feet and look up into her face, and tell her stories of his exploits, which the landlady's grandson most certainly had not. If only that little boy could have changed places for a time with Robert Roberts!

This was how the thought had birth. Through how many stages it passed, before it reached that final one in which it was put into action, it would be impossible to say; but one day Purvis went to Mrs. Roberts and asked her whether, if he were to have a little nephew of his upon a short visit to Aberafon, she would grant him a share, pro. tem., in the grand-maternal privileges which fell to the lot of the other child. There had been a pitiful little

allusion to "that poor, pretty little Mrs. Seaton Smith" in a letter from his sister by that morning's post, and it struck him that if he took her into his confidence, certain difficulties with which he had been contending in his own mind might be overcome. For example, she would be returning within the next day or two from London to Monmouth, whence it would be very easy to send the little fellow on to the Junction, and then Hugh could himself meet him and bring him the rest of the way to Aberafon. He did not trouble himself as to any difficulty there might be in inducing the child's parents to spare him. When a boy happens to be the eldest of six, he is apt to be regarded as self-helpful and independent at a very early stage of his existence, and Purvis never doubted but that Regy would be lent to him, without any troublesome enquiries as to the real significance of this new freak of his. In this conjecture the event proved him right; but just the same, not once merely, nor twice, but over and over again before his small guest made his appearance, did he wish with all his heart he had left the whole matter alone. He had never before had personal experience of

The tangled web we weave,  
When once we practise to deceive;

and he was appalled at the edifice of falsehood, to which, it appeared to him, something had to be added every day. To the Seaton Smiths he had attributed this eccentric exercise of his hospitality to a sudden desire upon his own part to see Regy disporting himself after the same enjoyable fashion as Robert Roberts, and there the details of the deception ended; but to Lady Cricklewood he personated a *bonâ fide* uncle, not only indulgent to his sister's offspring, but so solicitous about its health as to burden himself with it in this remarkable manner.

"I must say, in the whole course of my experience, which is a tolerably long one," the old lady remarked to her kinswoman, soon after the advent of the nephew, "I never met with any young man who would have put himself out in the same way. But then there are not many, who would do as much for the entertainment of an old woman."

"No," said Mrs. Fleming dryly, "I don't know that there are."

There was nothing in the words, but there was a significance in the tone that was not altogether pleasant, and the other looked up sharply.

"You are one of the most prejudiced persons I have the pleasure of knowing, Barbara," she said with asperity; "what fault you have to find with Mr. Purvis I cannot conceive. He is most good-natured and attentive, and yet you never have a good word to say for him. If it were not too absurd, I should say you were positively jealous of him."

"With you, Cousin Katharine? I am not sure I should be so far wrong," laughed Mrs. Fleming; "I don't know what you would have done without him. No, I am not jealous, but I can't quite make the man out, and I agree with the Psalmist—I put no confidence in men, as a rule."

"You have not had reason to—one grants all that; but you'll get horrid, my dear, if you give way to that kind of thing, and go in for dialiking and distrusting everybody you meet. And as to this poor young man, he does his best to be friendly, and I do think it very nice of him about the child, and so would you, if you were the child's mother."

Yes; Barbara thought if she were the child's mother, she certainly should. The attention Purvis paid to the little fellow, and the trouble he took to draw him out, were astonishing. And he was a pretty little lad, too, and had long golden curls and beautiful, grave blue eyes, such as no woman with a motherly heart in her could resist. How they came by their angelic expression was a mystery to one at times, for a saucier, more insubordinate little urchin, when he took it into his head, did not exist. He was great at athletics, Purvis discovered, and being a year older, and taller in proportion than his new comrade, so punished that youth the first time they had an altercation, that half a year's wear was taken out of his best suit at once, and Uncle Hugh had to insist strongly on the iniquity of putting out all your strength upon an adversary smaller than yourself.

The encounter had taken place, too, under Lady Cricklewood's very nose, and Purvis began to fear that where the one child had been an attraction, the two might become a nuisance. It was a positive relief when Master Reginald was put on the sick-list for a time with a cold, and, subdued by that ailment and the confinement it entailed upon him, was induced to show the softer side of his character to his new acquaintances, who, for their part, packed him up on a sofa in the drawing-room, and read to him, and told him stories, and had

gone far in a couple of days towards losing their hearts to him.

He was all right and about again, when Purvis was disconcerted by a sudden summons to his aunt's. She was dangerously ill, and he was bound to go. To take Regy with him was out of the question, and there was no time to arrange for his removal. After all, he was not likely to be away for long in any case. All he could do was to trust him to Mrs. Roberts.

"I am sorry to lose you," Lady Cricklewood said graciously; "and I am sorry for the cause. Make haste back again, or I shall have lost Mrs. Fleming before you return. You need not trouble yourself about the child," she added by way of valediction. "We will keep a look-out upon him—Barbara and I."

She spoke so genially and in such good faith, and shook Hugh's hand so heartily as she did so, that his conscience gave him the sharpest twinge he had yet experienced, as he bade her good-bye. After all, what right had he to deceive her, and what good was likely to come of it? What chance was there that the child would obtain such a hold upon her affections as to enable him—Hugh—to tell her the truth with impunity? Quite unconsciously to himself, his crestfallen appearance scored another point in his favour with the old lady.

"I do hope that aunt of his has money to leave him, and that he knows it," she observed to the unsympathising Barbara, as she turned away from the window, whence she had been watching his adieux to the children. "I should like to believe that anyone who expected mine would look as woe-begone, when there was nobody to report upon it, at the news of my illness."

There was no answer but a little impatient sigh, as Mrs. Fleming folded up her work and prepared to go out. Should she be very sorry, she wondered, when the time came? Should she be sorry, with any real, positive sorrow, for anything that could befall her nowadays? She did not know, but she did know that any such grief as she might be capable of would be in no way mitigated by the money that might come to her, and in her heart Lady Cricklewood knew it too.

#### IV.

It was two days after Hugh's sudden migration to Bath, and Barbara Fleming had just finished her solitary breakfast in the coffee-room, when Boy, as Purvis had

taught them to call him—the nickname he had been accustomed to use, and to hear used at home, coming to his lips more readily than anything else—came running in to her with an open letter in his hand, and a request that she would read it to him.

"Grannie tried," the child said—he went shares with Robert Roberts in his relationship to the kind-hearted landlady as well as in other more substantial privileges, for the time being—"but she can't make out father's writing, and she said if I brought it to you, you could. And it is such a long letter—all that, and that, and over here again, and here at the end is a little bit from mother; she could read that beautiful, Grannie could, but father's is too hard; and there, see—there are kisses from Nanny, and Jenny, and Eric, and Baby-boy. Will you sit down here and read it me now?"

He was in such a hurry to tell her, and told her so breathlessly, that it was all she could do to follow him, but his eagerness touched her as his beauty and his pretty ways—though she had not been insensible to either—had never done. He had not talked much about his home, and the other little people he had left behind him—he had been too happy and too well amused to suffer from home-sickness—and Barbara had observed the absence of any symptoms of it with a surprise that was not unmingled with a certain disappointment. She thought she should not have liked her boy, had he been spared to the same age, to be so free from it. She could have taken him up in her arms now and kissed him, had it been in her to do anything so impulsive; as it was, and being what she was—a shy, cold-mannered woman, in whom the fire never came to the surface, unless it was brought there by a blow, such as was, happily, not often dealt her, she simply sat down as he requested, and began to read the letter aloud to him.

A pretty, pleasant little letter, brimming over with such varied terms of endearment and such humorous and jovial messages to Uncle Hugh, that even Barbara found a pleasure in reading it, distinct from that she was giving, and surprised herself more than Boy, now and then, by a soft laugh. It was a long letter to have been written to a child, and she read it lingeringly and emphatically, with frequent repetitions. But she came to the end at last, and when she did so come, and saw the name that was written there, her lips framed

it in so strange a way, and she turned upon the boy so abruptly, that the little lad, who had been standing close up to her, fell back a pace or two, more than half frightened.

"Seaton Smith!" she was saying in what appeared to him a strange and terrible voice. "You never told me that your name was Seaton Smith. Tell it me now directly—your right name!"

"Reginald Purvis Smith," the child replied promptly. "But mamma calls papa Seaton when there's anybody to dinner, and he calls her Nellie; but when we're only our own selves, and there isn't nobody at dessert but Jenny and me, he calls her Puss, and she calls him Dolly, but he won't let her say Dolly when there's anybody there. And once she said she would—and what do you think he said he'd do if she did? He said he'd call her Mrs. Smith."

"No—did he?" said Barbara. "And why do you call Mr. Purvis 'Uncle Hugh,' when he is not your real uncle at all?"

"But he is," persisted Boy. "In course he is my uncle. And so is Uncle Edward and Uncle Walter; but I like Uncle Hugh the best, and so does Jenny, and all of us."

Mrs. Fleming smiled, but it was not a pleasant smile.

"I think I can understand the sort of relationship, and the charm there is in it," she said to herself. "I don't suppose the genuine article is in a position to be of much use in either case. The substitute has money, I don't doubt, and he does not stick at a trifle to oblige a friend. That is evident. The question is, What is to be done now?"

She sent the boy off with his letter, and sat down to think. It was not easy; the thing had come upon her so suddenly. The one only resolve at which she had arrived, when she heard her kinswoman's step upon the stair, was the resolve to hold her peace for the present, so far as she was concerned. But, later in the day, sauntering by herself amongst the primroses in the old-fashioned wilderness of a garden to which Purvis had introduced her on their arrival at Aberafon, she was more successful in arriving at a conclusion, and before she went down to dinner in the evening there was a letter in the post-bag which—could she have seen the address upon it—would greatly have mystified Lady Cricklewood.

"You will be surprised and, I think, a little dismayed," it ran, "when you find from this that your child has betrayed, most

innocently and in the most natural way in the world, the secret your friend—of whose absence from Aberafon you must, I fancy, be unaware—has been good enough to keep for you. The boy brought his father's letter to me this morning to read. I am not writing to you now to express my opinion upon any part of your conduct, past or present; but there is one point upon which, I think, if anybody may and can speak, it is I, who know your aunt and have known her for years, better, I suppose, than anybody else in the world. You will never succeed in patching up your quarrel with her by the employment of a ruse of any sort. If you wished to estrange her hopelessly and for ever, you could not have selected a surer method of doing it. You have laid at my door in the past so much to my discredit, that I scarcely know myself why, instead of going to her now and telling her how she is being duped, I should be writing to warn you against your own folly; but that it is a folly you may take my word. I should like you to understand me clearly. Whatever you may chance to do, you need not fear any interference from me. Lady Cricklewood has done all and more for me than I had any right to expect. I have no wish to stand in your light, and I think it a pity, considering all she once did for you, and was to you, that you should continue to stand in your own. My advice to you is to try and make friends, fairly and openly. You cannot expect any advance upon her part; it is not reasonable or likely, and it would be idle to wait for it—but I think, if you were to make it, it would be a comfort to her, greater than anything I can now do for her would be, and for her sake I tell you so. You must please yourself whether you take any notice of this or not. I neither have said, nor shall say, anything to my cousin with regard to the child."

It ended as abruptly as it began; and as she signed it with the name which had never yet been known by the woman she had not seen since they were both girls, she wondered whether, after all the years, the small, strong, legible characters would recall the writer.

The next morning brought a telegram from Purvis to the effect that he should be at the Junction in good time in the afternoon. Everybody was glad; Lady Cricklewood, and the landlady, and the little boys, between whom Hugh had been careful to make no distinction; everybody but Mrs. Fleming, who felt the burden of her secret

knowledge weighing her down in a most unpleasant manner from the moment she heard of his impending arrival.

Had her manner been habitually less constrained than it was, it must have struck the young man; but he had ceased to look for any cordiality from her, and, meeting with so much from everybody else, scarcely missed it.

The hotel had not begun to fill, and they had the drawing-room to themselves, and went back to their game at cards—those two—and Barbara to her knitting and to her thoughts, which were not so monotonous as before, as if there had been no break at all. Only Barbara knew all the difference those three or four days had made in their relations to each other all round; and was sorry, in a way, to watch Hugh's pleasant face, and listen to his gay, good-humoured chatter, and not be able to think of him without a touch of the scorn she felt for his friends. No man had a right to allow himself to be made a party to a deception, whether he derived any benefit from it or not.

There was no letter from London for Mrs. Fleming, as she had thought there might be, the next morning. She would scarcely have confessed to herself that she had lain awake half the night, speculating as to its arrival, and its contents; but it was the case, nevertheless, and she was down and in the coffee-room half an hour earlier than usual—though she knew it had not come—from sheer inability to stay in bed. Purvis was coming out of the room as she went into it, having dispatched his morning meal at his accustomed hour, but with unaccustomed celerity. It was very rarely they met thus early in the day; the young man having, as a rule, gone fishing before either of the ladies put in an appearance; but Mrs. Fleming's quick sight took cognisance of two things in the mere act of shaking hands with him—first, that he was not arrayed for boating, or anything of the kind; and secondly, that he looked more flurried, and out of sorts, than she had ever seen him. The landlady spoke to him as he passed, and it was evident from the few words that were exchanged, that there was something amiss, and she knew it.

"Then you do mean to send the telegram, sir?"

"I am going now, but you had better get everything ready, just the same; the train will have to be met, anyhow."

Barbara Fleming sat down to her break-

fast, and tried to stifle the curiosity she was determined not to gratify; but tried in vain. The waiter hung about, and would, in all probability, have volunteered the information she was longing for, to anybody else; but Mrs. Fleming was not in the habit of inviting communications in such quarters. Happily, perhaps, for all parties concerned, Grannie, as Boy called her, had that youth in her arms in the bar-parlour, and was apostrophising him with almost tearful earnestness, when Barbara had occasion to pass that way.

"But I don't want to go—and in course if I do go, I'll come back again, and I'll bring Jenny. But Jenny's only a girl, and I don't s'pose you'll like her—not so much as me; but I'll bring her, 'cause I know she'd like to come, and she's quite big enough—she's nearly as big as me."

"What is he talking about?" demanded Mrs. Fleming, fairly startled at last out of her assumed indifference. "Mr. Purvis is not going away, surely?"

"Oh no," the landlady answered; "he is not going himself, and he is in a great way about the child. He can't make it out at all. If the letter had come to himself, it would not have seemed so strange, but it is not to him, but to me—that is to say, to the manager, which is the same thing—just a line, and no more, to say as the little fellow's wanted at home, and there'll be someone at the Junction to meet him, in time for the twelve-forty. He is rarely put out about it, is Mr. Purvis, and the order coming like that, as if he had nothing to say to it. He has gone to telegraph to try and get at the meaning of it, but, of course, the train must be met, anyhow, whether the little gentleman goes or not."

Barbara walked away almost mechanically, and sat down on a bench outside the door in the sunshine. She understood it all well enough, though Purvis did not. She had done these people an injustice, after all. They were not mean-spirited enough to play the part she had dictated to them, knowing that it was thanks only to the contemptuous mercy it had pleased her to show them, they had not lost their all on their first venture. The reply to her letter was contained in the recall of Boy. They had tried a policy of their own, and it had failed, but they would have nothing to say to hers.

Well, she could not help it. She had done her best for them and for Lady Cricklewood, and she would never have

the credit of it. People had heard enough of the harm she had been supposed to do Nellie Palmer; they would never hear of the good turn she had tried to do Mrs. Seaton Smith. It was her luck!

She was still sitting there, lost in thought, and forgetful of the old lady awaiting her upstairs, when Purvis came up the hill from the little post-office, with an open telegram in his hand.

"It is from Boy's mother," he said, stopping before her, and looking very uncomfortable. "His father will be at the Junction to meet him and take him home, and I am to be 'good enough to explain things to Mrs. Fleming.' Perhaps you will tell me how much you know, and I will try and supply the rest. I had a dim idea of doing some good to somebody for once in my life, and nothing would appear to have come of it but mischief."

"I don't know," said Barbara slowly, whilst a sudden light sprang into her eyes. "I am not so sure."

It is an old story now, and everybody knows the end of it, though I doubt whether one ever hears anywhere quite the correct version of it. Barbara Fleming is very silent as to her share in it, and nobody knows but Lady Cricklewood herself how hard a battle her kinswoman had to fight, before she obtained the old lady's authority to send that message by Purvis to Seaton Smith, which resulted in the addition of Boy's father to the dinner-party at Aberafon that evening.

"You have longed to make it up with them in your heart, Cousin Katharine, ever since the day when we laid my poor little darling in the churchyard at Cricklewood," Barbara had urged, with a vehemence which told for so much the more that it was so unusual. "Don't let me have it on my mind that I have made matters worse than they were between you by adding insult to injury, as I was told just now, and accusing them of a meanness they had not been guilty of. She is your own flesh and blood, after all; and as to her husband—she was wilful, and she took her own way. But, Cousin Katharine, she is better off to-day than I, good as you have been to me! I think you may hold out your hand to-day, after all that has happened, to Boy's father, and confess frankly that the girl who married him knew him better than you did when she refused, for the sake of anything you might bestow on her, to give him up!"

### "OH, MISTRESS MINE!"

At this distance of time details are somewhat dim; indeed, if they were not, I should not care to be very accurate about them, especially as to the precise names of people, or of the locality where what I am going to relate happened. Barston-le-Moor sounds like it, and as the name is of little consequence, let us call it Barston-le-Moor. Nor do I accurately remember by what precise route I reached the rough, wild, out-of-the-way district in which the little straggling Yorkshire village was situated, and where I came upon a great turning-point in my life; I only know that it was in the year 1849, when I was vagabondising about that part of the country. I use the word "vagabondising" advisedly, inasmuch as my conduct was so described by my father. Very likely it was correct, for apart from the fact that in those days artists, players, writers, and the like were regarded by "highly respectable" people as worthless idlers, I am afraid there has always been an inherent vein of the vagabond in my blood. If not actually "ragged," I was probably next door to it; and "tanned" I certainly must have been, from constant exposure to "the changeful sky." At any rate, I was suffering under the severe displeasure of my father. I was nearly nineteen, and since leaving school, four years before, I had never opened a book, except a novel. He had wished me to go to college, to take a degree, and follow one of the learned and respectable professions. Our views did not coincide. I was determined to be an artist, a landscape-painter—chiefly, perhaps, because I loved nothing so much as being in the open air, and watching the smiles and frowns of Nature, and not because I had any 'special genius' with the pencil.

Thus, at last, my father and I agreed to differ. I took myself off from the parental roof, and with an allowance of fifty pounds a year, determined to make my own way in my own way. Only later did I appreciate the depths of sorrow and disappointment into which my decision plunged the kindly old gentleman.

So I was vagabondising about Yorkshire, trying to sketch, and pretending I was studying my self-appointed profession. Not without enthusiasm for it, I nevertheless was easily discouraged when what I was pleased to call "the work" did not go



well. Then I would become for a while literally a mere wandering idler, never touching a brush for days, but solacing myself with the vain pretext that I was, at least, educating my eye, and seeing the world of nature. For, be it observed, towns had no attraction for me, and my wanderings were strictly limited to the roughest rural districts. Hence it fell out one sultry evening at the beginning of August, in the year above-named, I reached a little solitary wayside inn, on the brow of a hill, on a wild Yorkshire moorland. It looked decent and clean—good enough to pass a night in—and being tired, and disinclined to pursue my rambling farther, I entered the neat sanded parlour, and unslung my knapsack.

Yes, I could have a bed for a night or two, or for three or four, might be, the landlady told me; but beyond that she couldn't promise. The great cattle fair would begin next week, and then her house would be full of her regular customers. This offered no difficulty, for I did not propose staying more than one night in the neighbourhood. Nevertheless I stayed in that neighbourhood over six weeks.

Yes, I could have some bread-and-cheese and beer for supper, and in a few minutes it was brought to me. But oh—not by the landlady, but by one of the sweetest and fairest girls it has ever been my luck to see. She was the first and the last woman that ever inspired me with a great passion. Tall and robust, and yet refined, with delicate features, and, for her size, small and well-shaped hands and feet, dark wavy hair, deep blue eyes, slightly olive complexion, and brilliant teeth—a perfect Juno, almost Italian in type, but speaking with a strong Yorkshire accent. And here let me say, once for all, that as I do not feel capable of spelling that vernacular, I shall not attempt to convey it in her case, or in that of any other of the characters who may appear in this narrative. Let it be understood, therefore, that they all speak in their dialect.

"You must lead rather a dull life here," I ventured to opine.

"No, indeed," she answered; "I do not find it so—at times there is a great deal of life along this road, especially during the fairs. Besides, my father lives in the village yonder, and though I don't live with him—because I can be more useful to my aunt up here—I spend many hours with him daily; he is an old man now,

and wants much looking after, so my days are pretty well occupied."

"Oh, then there is a village near?" I enquired.

"Yes; Barston-le-Moor lies at the bottom of the hill by the river, not a quarter of a mile off."

"I wonder your father likes to spare such a pretty daughter. If you were my child I should be very jealous of your helping anybody else but me."

"Oh, he don't mind; he don't care much for me. He don't care for anything but money."

She said this with a slight sigh, and a somewhat grave expression which became her better than her smile.

"But it doesn't make any difference to me—at least, not much; for if he is not always very kind, I never forget that he is still my father, and that my poor mother—she was foreign by birth—loved him dearly, and I loved her more than ever mother was loved by child."

Tears started to the girl's eyes, and the dictum that beauty is never seen to such advantage as when in sorrow was fully verified. I felt convinced from that moment that this country damsel was as pure, tender-hearted, and good as she was beautiful. I went to bed with this conviction, and with little else in my mind—and I have never had cause to change it.

Another conviction also forced itself upon me the next morning—namely, that I must stay at Barston-le-Moor. A ramble before breakfast proved it to be a very paradise for a landscape-painter.

My immature judgment even at that time told me honestly that I might go farther and fare worse for the purposes of my profession. It would have needed little to persuade me of this, apart from the sweet face and pathetic eyes of that fair girl at the inn; but I do not conceal the fact that her beauty formed a very weighty argument, for, as far as I could judge, the feeling I now experienced was love—deep, ardent, passionate love. I have read often of its happening at "first sight," had doubted the possibility—had been induced to sneer at the bare idea of such a thing; now I knew, not only that it was possible, but that here was a case in point.

Not to be tedious, I may add that in the course of the next few conversations I had with Martha Halstray—that was her name—I was plunged into a very vortex of delightful emotions by a conviction that

my affection was returned. Three days later I drew this confession from her own lips. Love had smitten both of us at first sight.

What it was all to come to, we neither of us stopped to think. The wild delirium of this boy-and-girl passion, when it is sincere and deep, as we felt ours to be, gives no room for thought. We only knew that we loved deeply and passionately, and that no power on earth should separate us.

Yet there was one prosaic consideration which soon forced itself upon our attention. I could not stay at the inn, as the landlady had told me, after the end of the week, and the end had now come. The good woman knew nothing, of course, of what had passed between her niece and me, but when I told her that I wanted to stay at Barston for purposes of my profession, she immediately suggested that I should take the room her old brother had to let.

"'Tis small and rough," said she, "but clean and comfortable; he'll be glad to let it you, for he dearly loves earning an honest penny. Yonder's his cottage—there!—that standing alone by the burn."

We were loitering just outside the door of the inn, and she pointed to a little solitary, grey, slate-roofed cottage on the rocky bank, about a hundred yards up the river from the bridge.

"Let us go and see the room, then, at once," said I, and away we went down the hill, the landlady calling to Martha to see to the house the while we were gone.

Old Reuben Halstray was about as unlike his beautiful daughter as parent well could be. An unprepossessing, grim-looking, little old man, with a broad, deep chest and long, powerful arms out of proportion to his height, a hard but clear-complexioned, clean-shaven face, with thick grey hair and shaggy eyebrows. His eyes—his only good feature—were the colour of his daughter's. But he was civil and willing to let me his room to sleep in if I could otherwise "fend for mysen," which, of course, I could easily do at the inn.

The room and cottage must be described, as they belong materially to what follows. The building was but one storey high, so to speak, having but two rooms, one above the other. That in which we stood, and which was entered by a door opening straight on to the rough path up to it, served its owner for sitting and sleeping chamber. Being a shoemaker by trade, it might have been said that this, his stall, "served him for parlour, and kitchen, and all."

His little truckle-bed stood in a corner at the farther end, by the second, or back window, which exactly faced that in the front by the side of the door. It was a common labourer's dwelling, with a beam running from end to end of the long, low ceiling, a brick floor, a broad hearthstone and a large fireplace and high stone chimney-piece, by the side of which was a stack of furze, faggots, and logs. Of furniture there was a settle, a plain wooden table, a few chairs, a cupboard or two, his working bench and stool near the window, a meagre rug, and some common, coloured hawkers' pictures on the whitewashed walls. Immediately opposite the fireplace, the steep ladder-stair common to such buildings in the North, with a dangling rope suspended from the kind of trap-door above, to help one in the ascent, led to the upper storey, and to my bedroom. I found the upper room of course, the same size as that below, but with a sloping roof and lower in pitch. It contained two beds; that by the front window of the pattern known as the four-post tent, old, tumble-down, rickety, and heavily curtained with faded damask; that by the back window a small iron-bedstead—a novelty in those days; rough bedroom accommodation standing about, and as if to make a show of dividing the room in two, an old-fashioned screen was drawn mid-way half across the room. I found them good-enough quarters; so the bargain was struck, and by-and-by I carried my knapsack down to them. The old man let me in, bolted and barred his door, gave me a candle, said "Good-night," and up the ladder-stair I went.

Naturally, I had selected the iron bedstead by the back window.

Where unbruised youth, with unstuffed brain,  
Doth stretch his limbs, there golden sleep will reign.

But my brain was so full of thought of Martha, that there seemed no chance of slumber overtaking me. Moreover, the old man was making some noise below for a long while after my light was out. He appeared to be rearranging some of his heaviest furniture, and even when at length this was done to his apparent satisfaction, and he was once more quiet, I could not sleep. I began to doubt even then if he had gone to bed, for a faint gleam of light shot up through the aperture at the head of the stair from the room below. No, I felt convinced he was still up. I could hear him still moving softly.

about. Growing a little curious, and more and more restless, I at last slipped quietly out of bed, and crept to the opening, that I might satisfy myself as to what he could be doing. Was he at his bench working late? I would see, and dropping softly on my knees, I peeped down in the lower room.

With a feeling of astonishment, not unmingled with a pang of apprehension, I found that the ladder-stair had been removed, and was standing a foot or two away from the aperture, so that the means of descent were cut off. Before almost I could recover from my surprise, and before I had time to look farther, the light was suddenly extinguished.

Irresolute for a minute or two, I remained listening with all my ears. Not a sound broke the stillness of the soft summer night, save the never-absent rush of the little burn tumbling along its rock-obstructed course. All was still in the room below, and before long I could tell, from his heavy breathing, that the old man was sound asleep. Somewhat reassured by this, I went back to bed, wondering what possible purpose could be served by thus isolating me in the upper storey. Clearly, no mischief was meant at present, and I was curious to see what would happen in the morning when it should be time to descend. My intention was to keep awake, and watch, and listen; but ere long sleep overtook me, in spite of myself, and the sun was high in the heavens when I awoke.

Once conscious, I lost not a moment in going to look down the opening, and found the stair replaced exactly in its old position. Had it really been removed at all, I asked myself, or had I been merely dreaming? The question seemed preposterous, but it left sufficient doubt in my mind to determine me for the present on saying nothing about the affair to anyone. I would at least wait and see if the strange proceeding was repeated the next night.

The few opportunities which I had in the course of the day of talking with Martha alone were too precious to be spent in questioning her directly or indirectly as to her father's habits at night. Indeed, she drove all thoughts not of herself out of my head; and, besides, I had one or two sketches in hand which I was growing eager about. For, without taking any definite shape, I suppose the idea began to stir within me that if this darling girl was ever to be anything to me I must

become worthy of her, and make some sort of a position. Hence I was keen about my work under this new stimulus, and the work seemed to be going fairly well.

The second night Reuben Halstray received me on his threshold as before, but on handing me the light he eyed me rather suspiciously, and as though my rap at the door, which he kept locked inside, had disturbed him. However, I took no notice, but went to bed, and could have readily fallen asleep but for the determination I had formed. Half an hour passed in comparative silence, but then followed the noise which the previous night I had taken for the moving of furniture, but which of course arose from the shifting of the ladder-stair. There was no need to go and look. I could follow the proceeding by the sound it made; and, as no harm had come of it before, I should probably have been content to accept it as a harmless fad or fancy of the old man's, had not he continued to remain up very much longer than he did the night preceding, and had not the glow from his candle found its way through the open stairway long after the tiny church-clock in the distance had chimed midnight. Overwhelmed at last by curiosity to know what he was doing, I sprang out of bed, but happening to make a noise by kicking against a chair, the light was instantly extinguished. Ere it went out, however, I had just time to see that the ladder had certainly been removed. Standing quite still lest he should think I was watching, I waited patiently until I heard him shuffle away to his bed, and not long afterwards he was breathing heavily. Nothing more could be done then but to resume my rest. In the morning I found the ladder again replaced.

Well, the third night came, when precisely the same thing occurred. After I had been in bed some half-hour, the stair was removed, but I had this time made up my mind to discover what always kept the old fellow up so late afterwards. So with the greatest caution to make no noise, I was at the opening the moment the ladder was gone, and craning my head and neck down endeavouring to watch his movements. A low handrail or balustrade ran round three sides of this opening as a protection, and the fourth, into which the head of the ladder fitted, when it was in position, was so close to the wall that there was considerable difficulty in seeing far

into the room below. But after hearing him shuffling to and fro for a while, I could just manage at last to see his back and heels. He had evidently set his candle on the floor near the hearth, and was kneeling down beside it as if examining something—I could not tell what. Presently, however, I heard a chink, and then in an instant the truth flashed across me. He was counting money; I could hear him muttering, and then followed the crinkle of bank-notes—there is no mistaking that sound, even though one's handling of that sort of paper is as limited as mine was. Yes, old Reuben Halstray was a miser; no doubt of it. But where did he keep his treasure? Probably beneath the hearthstone, or thereabouts, for he was leaning forward in that direction. This was the secret of his cutting off his lodger from all access to him, while he was nightly gloating over his hoard; this was his nightly amusement.

I watched him for fully ten minutes, I suppose, and heard him mumbling, and counting, and chinking his gold until he slowly at last seemed to secure the hiding-place without much trouble, and I saw the rug dragged forward, of course to hide the place in the floor. Then he went to bed and so did I. Thus satisfied that no harm was intended to me by this nightly removal of all means of communicating with the lower world, I determined to remain silent on the subject as I had hitherto done. No object was to be served by speaking of it even to Martha. I would keep the old fellow's secret.

Preparations had been making for some days for the great cattle fair to be held on a hill near the little inn. Drove of oxen and sheep, small rough ponies, and strings of young horses haltered tail to nose, were already beginning to arrive, and were being folded in various adjacent fields and pasturages. The rough Yorkshire drovers began to make the place rather intolerable for purposes artistic, and probably I should have beaten a retreat had it not been for the cause which held me spellbound. I jealously resented their intrusion at the inn, and the coarse familiarities they offered to my love; but she bore herself so beautifully through the ordeal, to which, of course, she was accustomed, that I had no pretext for complaint.

It was on the evening preceding the first day of the fair—a lovely, soft, calm evening—that I lingered on the bridge on my way homeward to watch the beauty of the scene, as it caught a passing salute from the not

quite faded twilight. Ten o'clock had just struck, and something like its usual quiet was settling over the village, when the distant barking of dogs rapidly approaching, and the hoarse shouts of men, presaged the arrival of a belated drove of cattle.

They were coming down the road opposite the hill where the fair was to be held, and on the brow of which stood the inn, and they would obviously have to cross the narrow bridge. I drew aside ere the leading beasts were upon it, but at the corner some of them took it into their heads to diverge along the bank leading to Halstray's cottage.

This caused a tremendous scrimmage, and dogs and men uplifted their voices, and scampered to and fro as wildly as the cattle. They were not set straight again under some minutes, during which such a torrent of foul language was poured forth by the two drovers, that Billingsgate might have felt itself outdone. They were about the roughest pair I had hitherto encountered, and it was a relief when they and their charge were out of hearing, and I was left to the comparative quiet of the tumbling stream. Whilst still lingering to finish my pipe on the bridge before turning in, I saw the figure of a woman coming hurriedly down the road from the direction of the hostelry, and up which the cattle had passed. Presently coming closer, it proved to be the landlady, and that I was the object of her quest.

"Oh, sir, I am glad you have not gone to bed," she cried, "for I have just stepped down to ask a great favour of you. You know our house is over-full already, and now have just arrived two more customers with the last drove, and I must find them beds somehow. There is not a shake-down for another soul in our house, and I wanted to know if you'd any great objection to my old brother letting them the spare bed in your room? It will be only for a night or two, and they'll be up and away long before you are astir in the morning. The screen will shut them off from you; please do oblige me, sir, and let them come."

"Well," said I, "if it's that pair which have just gone up the hill, they are not quite the sort of chaps I should care to share a room with."

"Likely enough, sir, but I believe them to be respectable men, though rough. Their beasts are folded for the night in one of our fields, and one must turn a penny when one can. They'll do you no harm, sir; kindly let them come."

I did not like the notion, and I resisted for a minute or two, but I finally gave way, and we went round to her brother's cottage together to prepare him for his new lodgers.

Of course, he was nothing loth, and even while we were talking at the open door, I heard the men coming across the bridge.

"Well, then, I'll say good-night," said I; "I had better get into my own crib out of their way."

This I did forthwith, expanding the screen to its full extent across my end of the room.

Presently, as they came clattering up the stair, though they seemed to be doing so as quietly as their heavy boots would admit, and though they spoke but little, and in subdued voices, I half regretted that I had given way so easily. However, it was too late now, but I could not help wondering whether the old miser had any qualms. I wondered, too, whether he would remove the ladder and have a gloat over his hoard as usual. I devoutly hoped he would not. The screen was so placed now that it cut off my view of the opening, and as very shortly everything was perfectly quiet and in darkness, save for the faint light from the summer night's sky creeping in at my window, I soon fell asleep.

In dreamland, however, the previous nights' experiences were re-enacted; the ladder was taken away, old Reuben was counting his money. I was watching him, but in company now with the two drovers; they seemed to witness what I witnessed, and the consciousness that they were now participators in the secret produced a kind of nightmare only to be dissipated by the bright rays of the morning sun. All, however, was in order when I got up, and the two men were gone out. Whether there was any actual foundation for the dream it is not easy to say; my belief is that the old man had refrained from his sordid feast.

The fair would have proved amusing had I been then in a mood for desultory occupation. In the present earnestness of my spirit it bored me, and right glad was I when the last day came, followed by the last night that the spare bed was to be occupied by those rough fellows. I think they were there four nights in all, and until the fourth there was no reason for regretting my good-nature. The men were quiet and orderly when in the house, however uncouth their bearing abroad.

We had interchanged neighbourly nods when we met, but we had held no further intercourse. They were later home that last night, and not too sober, I suspect, from the noise they made. Nevertheless, I soon fell asleep. My rest, however, was very disturbed; I kept dreaming of the old man and his money, and that I heard and saw him counting it perpetually. Suddenly I was roused from my dreaming to a state of complete consciousness by a light being flashed across my face. Starting up confused and dazed, I felt myself instantly pushed back on the pillow by two rough hands, and at the same moment I saw both the drovers bending over me. Before I could cry out—before, indeed, I could completely realise what I am describing—a handkerchief was thrust into and across my mouth, passed behind my head, and tied dexterously again in front as a gag. My arms were pinioned with equal dexterity by means of a short stick and cord.

"There," muttered the foremost man; "there; you bide still there till they comes in the morning and let's you go, and no harm won't come to you. If you hadn't woke there'd been no call to serve you so, nor the old man neither; but you are both so dreadful wakeful, there is no help for it."

Then the two fellows disappeared behind the screen, and I heard them blunder down the ladder, and then remove it.

All this had been the work, as it seemed to me, but of a few moments, and the suddenness of my awaking, and the outrage so instantly following upon it, paralysed my wits as well as my body. Activity returned to the former, however, sooner than to the latter, and I was not long in grasping the situation. Even as I did so, it was confirmed by further sounds below. The men were lifting or prising up the hearthstone or flooring—whichever it was, for I never rightly knew—where the old man kept his treasure. They made no pretence at keeping silent over their work. There was no fear of interruption, for, according to their own words, they had served the old man as they had me. The cottage was so far removed from the rest of the village that the neighbours, had they been wakeful, could hardly have heard them. They were cursing and swearing much as they had done when I first saw them, and appeared inclined to quarrel over the division of the spoil, which, as they counted, I could hear clinking and crinkling.

To lie there gagged and powerless to move in the presence of such an outrage was becoming unbearable; yet what could I do? Had not the whole affair by its suddenness and violence deadened my wits, I should probably have not remained inactive as long as I did, for although my voice and arms were helpless, my legs were free. When this fact at length struck me, I sat up in bed and then got out and stood upright. This did not, however, much improve the situation. Incapable of raising an alarm, I was still helpless. I automatically blundered to the head of the stairs, of course only to find the ladder removed. Only a dim light from the candle found its way up from below. I stood there for a minute, lurching to and fro like a drunken man in my mental and bodily agony, for the gag half stifled as well as cut me horribly. But worse was to come. As I staggered presently backwards towards my bed, I knocked over the screen, which fell with a crash. This startled the ruffians, and they commented in their usual tone on the circumstance of my having evidently got out of bed. One of them came beneath the opening and called up in effect "that if I couldn't bide quiet, it would be the worse for me."

Raging and indignant, like a young fool I stamped my defiance, with my naked feet, by way of a reply. Without noticing me further, there ensued a colloquy as to what was best to do. I heard them say something in substance like this: "Don't trouble about him, he can't get down, and when we've stowed the swag, we'll just give him a whiff of smoke—and the old 'un, too; it will be the safest plan. Smoke 'em out like a wasp's-nest; if the place is burnt down so much the better; it'll leave no trace. Folks will think the house caught fire by accident after we had left. The old missus at the inn knows we are off early—and see, day is breaking!"

A glance at my window verified this, and I now heard the fellows begin to drag some of the portable furniture into the middle of the room. Then I heard them take some faggots and loose wood from the store by the chimney, and pile them together. Then I heard a match struck, the faggots begin to crackle and splutter, and soon I smelt the fumes. Amidst many self-complacent oaths, the precious pair continued feeding the fire for some minutes, and then I knew they were unfastening the door. The next moment

they were evidently looking out, for the current of air made the smoke begin to rise through the stair-opening. Then I heard them depart, closing and locking the door after them.

I rushed to the front window, closed the tent-bed, and in the faint grey dawn caught a momentary glimpse of the two villains hastening up towards the moor by the path following the stream. I hurled my shoulder heavily against the tiny leaded casement, and smashed it open, cutting myself severely, for I had only my shirt on. Half mad, I rushed to the other window, and did the same there, now using my elbow and the end of the stick with which my arms were trussed. But this window was smaller and stronger than that in the front, and I had great difficulty in making an opening. My first impulse, after this, was to try and get out and jump for it into the little yard. But immediately beneath the window were a water-butt, a wheelbarrow, and a lot of lumber, on to which I must have alighted with direful consequences even if I could have got out to make a jump—which I could not, the aperture in the window being too small. Lying amongst the lumber, by the way, I distinctly remember seeing a ladder, which in some vague fashion gave me a foreshadowing of hope. I have never been before or since in so great an extremity, but I can well believe from this experience how trivial objects impress themselves upon the mental retina in moments of direful danger. I can see the look of that ladder now as I write, and all the objects near it. I could draw the details accurately.

Not so, however, with much the same result. The smoke was already fast filling this upper room, stifling me with its fumes, which, but for the vent I had given them at the two windows, must have overpowered me long ere they did. If imagination will give no idea of my condition, it is vain to attempt to convey it in words. I raved, I tore to and fro stamping and dashing about regardless of cuts and bruises. I could not go near the stair-head, for although the fire seemed to be burning sluggishly, volumes of smoke rolled upwards, and I could only breathe at last by keeping my head stretched out of window, for be it remembered my nostrils were the only vents left for my lungs. Daylight was still creeping on, but slowly—and my life hung upon the chance of some early stirrer seeing the smoke

pouring out through the windows. The heat, too, was becoming greater every moment, and the lurid glare now beginning to suffuse the room told me that flames were bursting out. Thus matters went on, I know not how long, until I became delirious and then senseless.

The next scene in this eventful history is once more at the inn. I am lying on the bed which I first occupied there, and am dimly conscious of great bodily pain; but, ah, if my suffering thenceforth had been only physical, there is no torture, I think, which I could not have borne, might it but have been limited to that! With recovering thoughts came a rush of bewilderment. That I had been rescued from the burning cottage was clear, but how, and by whom? And why was the landlady weeping as she bent over me? Why could she not speak, when, by degrees, I found my voice and asked how I came to be in safety?

There here entered the tall, gentlemanly man whom I knew to be the pastor of the parish. His dark clothes were besmirched and soiled, and his face smeared and blanched. He took my hand and said:

"You are breathing more freely now, and I feel sure no bones are broken; but it has been a marvellous escape, and unhappily not a complete one for all concerned."

Eagerly I asked him to explain, an ill-defined dread seizing me.

"Yes, I think I may make you understand a little now, but for the last two hours your mind has been wandering, and no wonder. We only got you out just in time; for half an hour we thought you were dead, and then for a long time you talked at random; but by God's mercy you will do well now."

I tried to raise myself and did so slightly, but with great pain. My lips, too, were bruised and swollen, and my words came thickly and indistinct with increasing excitement.

Endeavouring to calm me, the clergyman went on:

"As far as I can glean, the good girl here, Martha Halstray, was the first to discover the fire. She probably saw it from her window whilst getting up—it commands a full view of the village. At any rate, she was the first on the spot—the first to raise the alarm—the first to enter your room; in fact, it was she who, under Heaven, saved your life!"

Imagine my sensations on hearing this! I would have interrupted him with a score of eager questions, but he said:

"Be patient, sir, and you shall hear all by degrees; mind, if you excite yourself, your mind may wander again, and you will have something to explain to me in due time. Be calm."

I tried to comply, but I was overwhelmed with apprehension, though I could not tell of what.

"Once aware," continued the clergyman, "of what was amiss, I, with several willing hands, soon followed Martha to her father's cottage, to find that she, knowing the place and its owner's habits, had, with marvellous presence of mind, seeing that the wind was blowing from the back of the house, gone round there. Here we saw her, billhook in hand, at the top of a ladder, which she must have placed against the upper window, to which it barely reached, and which she was smashing in with all her might, despite the volumes of smoke pouring out and often almost hiding her from view. Soon she was clambering through the aperture, and then we lost sight of her entirely for several minutes. I, myself, was more than half-way up the ladder when she reappeared, struggling and gasping for breath, but bearing your senseless and helpless body with her. Then only did I see how helpless you were. In the midst of the terrible smoke, Martha and I managed to tear away the gag from your mouth and to get you over the window-sill, and to lower you by degrees into the open arms of those below. This, sir, is how you were saved;" and the good man turned away his head as he paused.

I seized his arm, and was about to question further, when he said abruptly:

"Now, please tell me what you know of this sad affair, and how you came to be so treated? How did the fire originate? Seeing the plight you were in, there must have been foul play somewhere."

His firm manner seemed to prevent the postponement of a reply, though I was burning to ask for my darling Mattie, where she was, and how she had fared.

The landlady had been standing by, wiping her eyes with her apron; but her grief seemed to abate in the anticipation of what I should say. Hurriedly, therefore, I recounted the events leading up to the terrible catastrophe. I told how I had discovered old Halstray's secret, and had kept it; how I supposed that the

drovers had also discovered it—how, indeed, everything fell out.

Many were the exclamations of surprise, indignation, and remorse on the part of the landlady for having been, as she said, the cause of it all by letting those men go to her brother's.

"But I took them to be respectable and honest," she said, "like most of their class." With this she fell to sobbing and crying again, and turning towards the door, added, whilst leaving the room: "And to think of my poor Martha—my poor Martha! It was all my fault—my fault!"

Unable longer to contain myself, I cried out to the clergyman, the words sticking in my throat:

"Oh, sir, do tell me—do tell me about the girl—Martha! Is she—is she hurt?"

"Yes," he answered a little curtly; "very severely——"

I fell back on the bed with a groan.

He came to my side, and went on, not without considerable emotion:

"Yes, I grieve to say she fell from the ladder. I had just reached its foot, partly holding you, and was proceeding, with the assistance of the men at hand, to release your arms, and bear you out into the clearer air, when I heard behind me a faint cry, followed by a crash. The ladder had slipped as Martha was descending, and she had fallen with it heavily amongst the lumber beneath. At the moment our whole attention was directed to you. Now you were laid upon the little patch of grass, and we all rushed to her—alas! to pick her up bleeding and insensible."

There was no need for more. By that intuitive quickness of apprehension which is begotten in the heart and soul of man or woman when evil happens to one they love—by that intuition, I say, I seemed to know at that moment as certainly as I know now, that Martha Halstray was dead!

Great Powers! shall I ever forget the agony of that hour, and of the days and weeks which followed? Even as I write, after more than five-and-thirty years, the emotions and sensations of that time return with a vividness and reality which quite unnerves and unmans me.

Yes; the only woman I ever have loved or ever shall love was thus taken from me whilst saving my life. When, five days later, I saw the earth of that peaceful churchyard away among the wild Yorkshire moors cast upon her, I said to myself:

"With you, oh, mistress mine, are buried those sunny hopes, those worthier and higher aspirations, which your love for a brief while kindled in my breast."

But for that accursed money—ill-gotten probably, ill-used certainly—but for it, how different things might have been! Practical people will say that this end, tragic and sad though it was, to a boy and girl love, can only be put forward as an excuse for an unsuccessful career by a weak man. They may be right, for I lay no claim to strength of character; but had Martha Halstray lived to be my wife—well, I shall choose, to the end of my days, to attribute my comparative failure as a painter to that experience at Barston-le-Moor.

To complete this account of it, perhaps, it should be added that the cottage was entirely destroyed. Nothing but the bare walls were left, and the calcined human remains eventually found among the ruins told only too plainly what had been the fate of its miserable old tenant.

Presumably, the robbers and incendiaries got clear off; at any rate, I never heard anything further about them after the coroner's enquiry, at which time they were still at large.

There can, however, be little interest attached to these details, which, as I stated at starting, are dimmed and faded by long years. Indeed, at the time they took but little hold of me, in face of the great calamity which marred my life.

## A SUMMER TRIP.

THE last train which passes through the little village-station of Holzdorf had stopped, deposited its passengers, and gone on its way again towards the steep hills it must climb before it leaves the Black Forest country. The station-lights were extinguished, and the road was dark, except for the light of a brilliant August moon, which fell full upon the front of the stiff brick Station Hotel, bringing into prominence its unpicturesque lines and disappointing air of modern newness. Ralph Poyning was not inclined to view it critically. He was tired after an unsuccessful day's fishing, and the open door promised him rest and refreshment. Besides, in the doorway stood the brisk little hostess, her white teeth gleaming in a smile of welcome.

"What success have you had?" she asked in German—a question which never



varied, and which Captain Poyning had learnt to understand, although his knowledge of German was extremely limited.

She hardly waited for his answer, so anxious was she to tell him her news.

The train had brought a great many visitors — amongst others, three English-women who spoke German beautifully, and were going to remain some time, so that the Herr would no longer be dull—though, indeed, he was improving so much in his German that there was no fear but that he would soon— Then, as he had divested himself of his fishing-basket, and moved away to the foot of the staircase, she suddenly dropped her conversational tone for a strictly business one, and asked what he would like for supper.

If the Captain's command of German words was limited in character, so was the variety of the articles of food at the hotel, and he was easily able to make his wants known to his hostess, whilst of her speech he had understood little or nothing. When he entered the long, narrow dining-room, he found his supper was not ready for him, and prepared to beguile the time of waiting by turning over one of the three illustrated volumes which formed the only literature of the inn. Beside these, on the low, old-fashioned piano which served as a side-board, lay a small book unfamiliar in appearance, and he took it up with the eagerness of a man long separated from new literature. It afforded him, however, a disappointment. It was a pocket text of the *Antigone*, with the name, "I. Stewart," in a small, compact handwriting on the fly-leaf. So the English people of whom Frau Müller had spoken were probably a reading party, and, therefore, supremely uninteresting in Captain Poyning's eyes.

"I know the kind of people," he thought to himself as he sat down to his steak and omelette. "A coach in spectacles, with a couple of unwilling victims. Perhaps one of them may care for fishing, though."

He brightened up at the thought; after all, even here he might find some touch of human sympathy; but the reality was far more terrible than anything that he had pictured. Yet it did not appear in a very horrible form, for the door of the dining-room opened, and an English lady, followed by her two daughters, came in. The mother was dignified and comely, the daughters pretty and smiling, but to Captain Poyning's horror, the elder of them moved quickly across the room

and slipped the Greek text into her pocket without betraying the slightest embarrassment at the revelation thus afforded to the Englishman who was watching her.

Captain Poyning began to calculate how long he had settled to remain at Holzdorf. To stay longer than necessary in the society of a learned lady was too terrible to contemplate, and he hurried through his supper as if he feared an instant attack from the pleasant-looking mother, who was pouring out coffee quite unconscious of the feelings suddenly awakened in her fellow-countryman's breast. The little party were well-amused with their own society; the youngest, whose fair hair fell over her shoulders in the prettiest of all fashions for a young and blooming face, was in that ecstasy of delight which a first tour abroad produces, and was enchanted alike with everything—with the little loaves of white bread, the thickness of the china cups, the excellence of the coffee, and the badness of the sugar. Carefully as Ralph Poyning watched he was unable to detect the cloven hoof, but he could not be sufficiently grateful for the chance carelessness which had sufficed to put him on his guard.

He did not, however, find himself in imminent danger, for a couple of days passed without his again seeing either the mother or daughters. He started early on his fishing excursions, and did not return till late, and in spite of its high-sounding name the hotel had no drawing-room, so that the only place or time in which the guests could meet one another was at meals in the dining-room.

The third day the necessity of writing some letters kept him in his bedroom during the morning. At half-past twelve he descended into the dining-room for the table d'hôte, which was the great event of the day. It was not a crowded meal; the three English ladies and a French commercial-traveller were seated at the long table, the latter pouring forth in voluble French the history of his sufferings during the great war. The ladies looked up with some interest at Captain Poyning when he took his seat, but the youngest telegraphed to her sister a glance which the Captain fortunately did not catch, as it was by no means a complimentary one. The Frenchman's monologue came to an abrupt end, and nothing broke the silence but the humming of some angry wasp disturbed in his meal, or hurrying in through the half-closed shutters to join his companions. They crawled on the food,

they crawled on the table-cloth; at last one, bolder than the rest, walked up the sleeve of the youngest lady, who was sitting near Ralph.

"Oh, please take it off!" she cried in a half-agony of terror, which was saved from being a whole one by her consciousness of the absurdity of the situation. "Oh, please be quick!"

Captain Poyning obeyed, and was rewarded with an amiable smile, and a "Thank you" which was rather embarrassed. Following the direction of the young lady's eyes, he saw the half-amused, half-annoyed look on her sister's face, and all his latent antagonism was aroused.

"You are not afraid of wasps, I suppose?" he asked, nettled into a somewhat supercilious tone.

"Not seriously," she answered carelessly. "Are you?"

After this, the meal was somewhat interrupted, for the Frenchman, anxious to show his courage and gallantry, valiantly attacked every wasp which came near him, thereby making the insects furious, and also irritating the maid who was waiting at table, and who freely gave her opinion of his folly.

The morning had seemed unbearably hot, but the afternoon proved how much more humanity can endure when it is convinced that it has reached the limit of suffering.

Ralph closed the shutters of his room to shut out the blazing sun and the dusty road, and sat down to read in the half-darkness he had created.

Slowly the darkness increased; the lines of light fell no longer through the bars of his shutters. He pushed these open to look at the leaden sky, which seemed a solid vault overhead. Here and there on the horizon—or rather, where the pine-clad hills stood out sombrely against the grey sky—an occasional flash of lightning broke the monotony; then, after a little pause, came the splash of large drops of rain falling upon the large oleanders drooping in their green tubs, and in a few minutes the driving shower had cooled the air.

Captain Poyning could hear the sound of hurrying feet and rapid exclamations as the maids rushed to and fro, closing the windows, and screaming at some sudden flash of lightning or resonant thunder-clap. He could hear the English ladies' voices just below him—their room opened on to the large balcony which formed a

portico to the hotel, and they were evidently watching and enjoying the view thus afforded them.

There is a certain monotony in the grandest storm, and after a little feeling of interest in the first twenty flashes, Ralph began to desire some other form of entertainment. None, certainly, was to be found in the narrow compass of his bedroom, with its scanty furniture, nor was it desirable to seek it beyond the walls of the inn; so his thoughts turned with a certain amount of yearning to those three illustrated books before-mentioned. At all events, the seeking them would afford him change of scene, and the dining-room, bare as it was, was not so confined as his own room.

He found it perfectly dark; all the shutters were fast closed; but he had little dread of stumbling over the scanty furniture of table and chairs, and he was cautiously making his way to the piano, when a low voice startled him. At the same moment a white figure arose out of the darkness, and a cold, trembling hand was laid upon his.

"Oh, please, is it nearly over?"

The English words, and the youthful, beseeching tones of the speaker revealed her identity to him; but he was for the moment uncertain as to the matter concerning which she made enquiry.

Then, as a sudden and violent thunder-clap made her draw instinctively nearer to him, he understood her meaning, and made answer very gently:

"It is passing slowly, but there is no occasion for alarm; the worst is over."

As his eyes grew used to the darkness, he could make out dimly a white face uplifted to his with a certain trust which saved him from any regret as to his somewhat rash assertions.

"My mother and Margaret like to watch the storm," the trembling voice went on, "so I went and shut myself in my sister's room; but the storm seems worse at the back of the house, so I crept down here."

"I came here for some books that were on the piano," he made answer in the hearty full tones of a man strong, healthy, and at peace with himself, which brought strength and comfort to his listener.

"On the piano! Oh, is there a piano here?" In the eagerness of her surprise she had forgotten her terror, and Ralph, with the tact of a kindly heart, determined to utilise his chance advantage.

"Don't you know that the sideboard is

a piano?" he asked, withdrawing the books, and opening the lid.

She moved towards it, her fingers, trembling still, rested uncertainly for a moment on the notes, and then began instinctively to form chords and harmonies.

"May I stay a little?" he asked, as he drew a chair for her to the piano, and settled himself at some little distance. "It is so long since I have heard any music."

For all answer, she began to play that quaint little jig of Corelli, which sets one wondering who were the fairy dancers for whom he must have written it.

Outside the lightning played, and the thunder crashed, but within the darkened room the music went on without break or interruption, and the troubled soul of the musician was soothed by the touch of the yellow keys, and sustained by the presence of a spirit stronger than her own.

She was startled by her companion opening a shutter, and letting in a delicious breath of cold air.

"Oh, is the storm over?" she cried. "How delightful!"

"It was not so very terrible, after all," he made reply; "and besides, it will have killed all the wasps."

"But I am not Margaret—I am Ida," said the musician gravely, advancing to the window. "I mean I am not the one who is afraid of wasps."

And, looking at her, Captain Poyning recognised the elder of the two sisters. As she stood at the window, the wind ruffling the ripples of her soft fair hair, and bringing a colour to the delicate pallor of her cheeks, he had time to admire the refined beauty of her features, and to notice the exquisite neatness of her simple pale-grey gown. Then, with a sudden revulsion of feeling, he wondered whether or not she still had the Antigone in her pocket.

During the ensuing week, the mute antagonism between Captain Poyning and his countrywomen slowly died away, and he even became great friends with the younger sister, who assuredly displayed no alarming amount of knowledge or wisdom.

"Miss Margaret," he said, looking one early morning into the dining-room, "are you writing a letter to the Times?"

She was seated on one of the window-seats, drinking in long draughts of air through the open shutter. There was no breeze stirring, not even air enough to disturb the sheets of paper scattered about on her knees and at her feet.

She put down her pencil, and made a comical grimace of despair.

"I am trying to do some algebra," she made reply, "and I am sitting here because it is cool. As soon as the sun comes round to this window, I shall run upstairs."

"Doing some algebra?" asked Ralph Poyning in a tone of astonishment. "Does she make you do that?"

"She does not make me," was the indignant answer, for Margaret imagined she was defending her absent head-mistress, and never dreamt that he suspected Ida of overworking her. "I do it because I like it."

Captain Poyning had not a large experience of young ladies, and this modern high-school girl, with her eager ambitions and her yearnings for intellectual distinction, was a specimen of a class with whom he had absolutely no acquaintance.

"Because you like it!" he repeated deliberately, as he picked up the scattered papers. "Now, tell me the truth—why do you really do it?"

"Because I want to learn things," was the ready answer, "so that I may be like Ida, and go to Girton."

"Girton! Oh!" There was a long pause, during which the Captain rallied from the shock. As soon as he could command himself, he added: "Your sister is at Girton, is she?"

"Did not you know that? Oh yes; she has been there two years, and I want to be just like her, and do all the things she has done."

"But what is the good of them?" urged Ralph. "What good does it do her, or you, or any woman, to learn Greek, and Latin, and mathematics?"

"Why do you learn things?" asked Margaret triumphantly. "You know you want to improve your German."

"That is a different matter. I want to get on in my profession."

Margaret's own ideas of the value of learning were hardly disinterested enough to allow her to exclaim at this purely utilitarian view of the matter; but she was at no loss for an answer:

"And Ida and I want to get on in our professions, too."

"To get on in your professions! The only proper profession for a woman is marriage."

"That is what men always say," Margaret severely answered. "But I am like Ida—I mean never to marry."

She tossed back her long fair hair as she spoke, and looked at him defiantly. There was a slight want of refinement in her gesture and outspoken speech, but its very frankness showed that she was not conscious of any need for delicacy in the discussion of the subject.

"Oh," said Captain Poyning very slowly, "your sister never means to marry! Those things are not always, I believe, within one's own control."

"If you mean because one falls in love," said Margaret, with the confidence of complete ignorance, "or any nonsense of that kind, I agree with Ida, that people can soon get over it."

She raised her voice as she enunciated her theory, and Mrs. Stewart, attracted by the sound, pushed open the door of the room.

"Margaret, I could not imagine where you were. I think you will find the room upstairs cooler;" and then, as Margaret coloured a little under the rebuke implied in her mother's tone, the elder woman laid her hand caressingly on the girl's golden hair. "I wonder what or whom you were denouncing so fiercely just now."

Neither her daughter nor Ralph answered her, and she moved away with her hand still caressing a tress of the long fair hair.

"Now, what is the result of all this learning?" argued Captain Poyning with himself as soon as he was alone. "The mother is as sweet, and gentle, and refined as possible, but the girls are completely spoilt—completely, utterly, and entirely—for the only life a woman ought to lead. A woman ought to be nice to hear and nice to look at, and if she is that no one need complain."

He could not refuse Ida the latter attribute as he stood beside her under the portico of the Station Hotel—it was Sunday afternoon, and the sun seemed extra bright, the roads extra glaring in honour of the day—in her pale gown and her soft, lace-trimmed hat. Again Captain Poyning had occasion to note with surprise the exquisite care which had made every fold of her dress as graceful, every scrap of lace as fresh, as if she had been just turned out from the hands of a French modiste. His notions of a learned lady had received a shock already, but he was not prepared to shatter his imaginary ideal.

"I think we ought to be starting," said Ida, as she unfurled her white sunshade. "I am afraid we shall have a warm walk."

"My dear child!" said Mrs. Stewart appealingly from within the hall, "it will give you one of your bad headaches, I am sure; do stay at home."

Ida shook her head, and Mrs. Stewart, who seemed to have no will except that of her daughters, started at once, Captain Poyning taking his place by her side, and the two young ladies following.

"It seems a very long way to the village—is there any shade before we get there?" asked Mrs. Stewart anxiously.

The road did not promise any except that afforded by a solitary tree, where the highway crossed the railway track, protected only by a notice-board, and a long scaffold-pole which could be run across to a support in time of need, so as effectually to bar the way to an irresolute person.

The only advantage offered by the road was in the narrow strips of grass on each side, which afforded coolness and comfort to the feet and rest to the eyes. Here the four walked, rarely lifting their eyes from the ground, and never turning them either to right or to left. Conversation under these circumstances was out of the question, but when the party had reached the village, and the houses afforded some shelter and coolness, Ralph overheard some speech between the young ladies, of which, however, only the closing words reached him.

"And so I tried to make your views clear to him."

"That was rather a pity, was it not?" asked the elder in a languid and slightly sarcastic tone.

The parish church of Holzdorf is not a large or imposing structure. But however little it may have to attract the ordinary sightseer, it was on this particular afternoon crowded with worshippers—mostly women and children, at least twenty of whom, unable to find room within, were standing outside the door in a little group, with their books of devotion open before them, and their ears strained to catch the words of the officiating priest. A few stones scattered under the hedges of the lane leading to the chapel—there was no churchyard around it—afforded a hot and uncomfortable seat, but after a little the glare of the sun and the monotone of the prayers made the English party sleepy, and they crept away as unobtrusively as they had come, making their way to a green and shady hillside a little way out of the village.

Captain Poyning disapproved of Miss Stewart; he disliked learned ladies, and

detested women with a mission ; but as he sat talking to her mother in the drowsy undertone suitable to a lazy Sunday afternoon, he could not help looking across at the drooping head and downcast eyes of the daughter. She sat absorbed in her book, her ungloved hand holding a piece of feathery grass, with which she followed each line as she read. How slender her hands were ! Then, with a sudden start, he began to wonder what she was reading.

The heat grew intense, and the desultory talk died away altogether. Lying back and pulling his hat over his brows, Ralph began to watch the slow movements of the grass in Ida's hand ; the monotony of her action would soon make him sleep, so he argued with himself, but as time passed on he found himself more decidedly wide-awake than before, and most unaccountably irritable at Miss Stewart's persistent and misplaced studiousness. It was, however, suddenly interrupted by a sound which made her look up with a smile. Mrs. Stewart, who had fallen asleep, gave a ladylike but decided snore, and then, as if conscious that something was amiss, opened her eyes, and said with gentle decision and a certain reproachfulness :

"It was not I, Ida dear."

Margaret had fallen asleep with her head in her mother's lap, and lay motionless and lightly breathing, the perfect picture of youthful repose.

"If you like to follow her example," said Ida with a smile, "I will keep watch and ward."

She spoke in a low, clear tone, and the sleeper never stirred, but it vibrated strangely in Captain Poyning's ears.

"You are too much occupied with your book to care for doing so, I suppose," he answered. "I was not careful to provide myself with literature."

"Would you like this ?" she asked, holding out the small volume ; "only perhaps you would not care for it."

Ralph showed almost rude eagerness to secure it, to open it, but he was not prepared to read it even when he found it was English poetry.

"Are you fond of Keble ?" he asked, but ill concealing his surprise. "I somehow thought——"

He paused before saying more, for Ida turned upon him a pair of clear eyes full of enquiry, and he straightway forgot everything but his wonder at their steadfast beauty.

"You thought——" she repeated ; then waited for him to continue his speech. She waited in vain, for he had opened the Keble, and was turning over the pages as if seeking for some particular object. "Perhaps you thought," she went on, "that I ought to know it all by heart, but I only know bits here and there."

"Captain Poyning," it was Margaret who spoke, clearly and distinctly as was her wont, "do you know that we are to have an *Italienische Nacht* in the hotel-garden this evening ?"

"I did not even know there was a garden," answered Captain Poyning, gravely intent on fastening a spray of grass into his button-hole, "and I have not the slightest notion what an *Italienische Nacht* may be."

"Lanterns and bands," was the concise answer ; "and as to the garden, it is dusty enough to look like a part of the road, but there are some trees and tables where people drink beer."

"And there is a skittle-alley, as I should think you must know from the perpetual rolling of the balls on Sunday evenings," said Mrs. Stewart, who had woken up and was preparing to move away. "I am afraid they will be later than ever to-night, because of the *fête*."

"Skittles, lanterns, and bands—these are the materials of which an Italian night is composed."

"I think it will be very interesting," said Margaret excitedly, "and we are going to have supper at seven, so as to give Frau Müller plenty of time to attend to the outdoor guests."

When Captain Poyning joined the ladies at an early supper as he had agreed to do, he found only the two younger ones there. Mrs. Stewart was suffering from a bad headache, the result of her exposure to the sun, and sent her apologies to him ; she hoped to be better by-and-by.

The meal was a sober one ; the little party had the dining-room to themselves—a little too entirely, as the maid who generally waited at table was so much engrossed with the business of the evening, that she rushed away to greet every one of the numerous arrivals, who at once proceeded to the beer-garden, and did not enter the hotel.

As soon as Margaret's supper was over, she rushed to the open window, and began to watch for the band, whilst Ida went up to her mother. When she returned, she

went up to Captain Poyning, and said in her earnest, easy manner :

"Mother is so sorry, she really cannot leave her room ; she says would you be so very kind as to take Margaret out to hear the music, and see the people, for a little ? If it would not trouble you, it would be a great treat to her."

Margaret looked an entreaty she was too well bred to utter ; and when she heard Ralph's cordial answer, she gave a skip of delight.

The moon was riding in a cloudless heaven, but under the shadow of the trees the darkness was thick enough to throw into strong relief the many-coloured lanterns upon the branches, which gleamed as if they were the jewels Aladdin once found growing instead of fruit.

"What a lovely scene!" cried Margaret. "I wonder when the music will begin."

To Captain Poyning the whole scene seemed vulgar and uninteresting : the crowds of peasants at the tables, with their common faces, their rough voices ; the mingled smell of beer and tobacco ; the roll of the skittle-balls, and the shouts of the competitors ; together with the braying of a brass band, and the glare of tallow-candles, formed a scene uninviting to more than one sense. He was, however, too good-natured to spoil Margaret's enjoyment, and let her exhaust herself in superlatives before he took her to the door of her mother's room.

"Oh, mother, it was perfectly lovely—do make Ida go and see it ! Do go, Ida !"

Ralph paused eagerly at the door.

"Do go out for a little, Ida ; I am sure Captain Poyning will take care of you."

In another minute she was walking by his side ; and the peasants were really honest, well-meaning country-folk, and the music was full of sweetness.

They made their way to the farther end of the garden, where there was an empty seat ; and Ida leant back to watch the scene.

The brass band broke into a waltz ; the skittle-players shouted with excitement ; and Captain Poyning looked with national pride—or so he thought—at the exquisite contrast afforded between the clumsiness of the German clowns about him, and the beauty of his countrywoman—her face softened by the white lace she had twisted round her head and throat.

Quite suddenly, and apropos of nothing, he spoke :

"Miss Stewart, your sister was telling

me some of the modern young ladies' views on marriage."

Ida turned round with an amused smile.

"Margaret has not considered the subject deeply, I fancy."

"She only repeats what she has heard others say. But tell me, have you really such a contempt for things of that kind ?"

Ida did not answer until she had collected her thoughts—then she decided that a sensible woman ought not to hesitate to give her views when they are founded upon reason.

"I think upon the whole that men and women do more work, and better work, if they remain single."

"But if they love one another," Captain Poyning urged—he was surprised at the emotion in his voice.

"I think that love is a very valuable experience," said Ida simply ; "particularly when it ends unhappily."

His whole soul rose in protest against the calmness of her answer, but he held his peace, only more than ever did he anathematise the terrible mischief training and education had wrought in her nature.

The Railway Hotel was exactly opposite the station, which close proximity probably accounted for the fact that Mrs. Stewart, her daughters, and Captain Poyning very nearly missed their train on the last day of their stay at Holzdorf. Frau Müller, no longer smiling, had bidden all and each a melancholy farewell, every girl and boy about the house had wished them a pleasant journey, whilst between the big dog and Margaret there had been a most affecting parting, which had been the crowning delay, and caused them all to rush wildly across the road, followed by three or four men with their luggage, their shawls, and hand-bags.

"Will you see to the luggage, and get Ida a comfortable carriage?" asked Mrs. Stewart, as she looked at the platform and ticket-office crowded with peasants. "Margaret and I will get the tickets and join you later."

Captain Poyning, of course, obeyed, registered the luggage to Heidelberg, disregarding, with true British courage, the explanations of the officials, which he did not understand, and happily unconscious that they were sternly refusing to forward any luggage which arrived so late.

"I don't like leaving Mrs. Stewart to do all the fighting," he said, as he returned to

Ida. "But I suppose she will make the clerk understand, which I never could."

Ida smiled, but there was little amusement on her face, which was looking white, and drawn as if with pain.

"I am afraid your head is much worse," he went on; "let me get you into a carriage, out of this crush, and then you can rest quietly, whilst I go back to help your mother."

She followed him without a word, and he made his way through the crowd until he found a comfortable carriage, and chose a corner seat for Ida. It was a pleasure to him to arrange his rug as a pillow for her aching head; to open the window, which was singularly stiff and tiresome; to find her eau-de-cologne, and to pay her those numerous little services which are too often a trouble to both giver and recipient. His delight in them made him linger a little too long, for he was suddenly startled by the sound of a harsh whistle and a slight movement of the carriage.

"Never mind," cried Ida, who could not help smiling at his start of horror; "I can see mother—she is getting into a carriage at the end of the train. I know her white shawl."

She sank back in her seat, and, the momentary excitement over, her face grew paler than before, and her eyes closed.

"You will not think me very rude if I go to sleep?" she asked humbly. "Sometimes, when I can do so, it cures these headaches."

He did not answer her in words, only rearranged the pillow he had put for her head, and sprinkled a little eau-de-cologne on the dusty seat of the carriage. She closed her eyes with a grateful smile, and leant back her head. Soon her breathing grew regular, and the look of pain disappeared from her brow.

She slept on. The train stopped, took in more passengers, mostly peasants in holiday garb, and went on its way again. Just as it was entering the second station, Ida woke up.

"How full the platform is!" she said dreamily. "Oh, please, don't get out!" as she saw him rising from his seat. "You will lose your place, and we shall meet mother and Margaret at the junction."

Captain Poyning sank obediently into his seat, only too much delighted at the prospect of another two hours in Ida's society, although they were surrounded by strange and inquisitive eyes, and she was

lying back, silent, dreamy, and half asleep.

The junction was reached at last, and the peasants crowded out of the one train into the other waiting for them, so as to leave the platform bare from end to end, but there was no sign of Mrs. Stewart or Margaret, although there were a couple of white shawls exactly similar to the one Ida had identified as her mother's.

As soon as the two were convinced of the truth of their position they looked at one another, and burst out laughing; then Ralph said:

"The first thing is to telegraph our whereabouts to Holzdorf, and the next to get something to eat."

Neither operation was very difficult. With Ida's help a coherent message was sent off, and then the two made their way to a small eating-house—it did not reach the dignity of an hotel—about twenty yards from the station. A table d'hôte was going on, and the view afforded was not particularly inviting, so Ida seated herself in the little garden under the shade of a large sycamore.

Here, after a little pause, she and Captain Poyning were regaled on excellent coffee and omelet, and by the time they had finished their repast, the answer to their telegram had arrived.

"Going on by express; meet us at Heidelberg," translated Ida. "Will you look out our train?"

With the dogged courage of a true Briton, Captain Poyning walked across the station, and studied the time-bills.

It was now three, and by a careful study he discovered that a train passed through the junction en route for Heidelberg about four hours later. Of the express he could find no trace, but he was glad to give up the search after a very short attempt to unravel the mysteries of a German timetable, and the matter was of little consequence, as the only important thing was to reach their meeting-place as soon as possible.

He went back to Ida and the little garden. He would have been content to spend the four hours in this paradise; but she grew a little tired of its narrow limits, and of the curious eyes which the servants of the restaurant occasionally turned upon her and her companion.

"The next station is only seven or eight miles off," he suggested, as he saw her a little restless at the enforced delay. "Supposing we get a carriage, and drive so as

to catch the train there? It would pass away the time pleasantly."

Ida gladly agreed—the respect of most people for conventionality is capricious in its nature, and Ida, being no exception to the general rule, imagined that she should find less awkwardness and constraint in her relations with Ralph when they were driving than when they were loitering together in the shady garden.

Accordingly they set out in a quaint, high-perched carriage, with a driver whose seat was much on a level with theirs, and a horse whose whole conduct was a protest against the absence of his fellow-worker. He was harnessed to a pole, and presented a most melancholy, unfinished appearance without a second horse by his side.

On they drove, through flat, far-reaching fields, which stretched out on each side of the dusty road.

"This is rather like Cambridge, is it not?" asked Captain Poyning, carefully approaching the dreaded subject of Girton. "This dull, unbroken level with no hills or break in its monotony."

"You have never been to Cambridge?" she answered quickly with a slight air of pique. "I thought not."

"One of my great chums is a don up there; I wonder if you know him—Wilton, of St. Ursula's, and he is always wanting me to go and see him."

"Mr. Wilton!" cried Ida, with a sudden flash of colour and gladness. "Do you know him?"

"Do you know him?" was the rather moody answer.

"Indeed I do! He is one of my lecturers, and I have learnt more from him than from any human being."

Human thought is rapid, and strangely inconsequent, or else why should Ralph Poyning's mind revert to a struggle in which he had once rivalled Wilton, and beaten him, as he remembered now with a grim joy which his triumph had never before caused him. It was only a matter of physical strength and skill, but Ralph had jumped one inch higher, and secured the silver cup; he gladly recalled the fact now, and lingered over it—was it as a memory or an augury?

The two relapsed into silence again—Ida first broke it after a long pause.

"If you do come to Cambridge, you ought to do so in the race-week; there is plenty to do and to see then, and you could go to any number of dances, if you like them."

"I suppose you don't care for such things?"

"On the contrary, I care for them a great deal too much," said Ida, laughing. "I get into trouble for dancing too much and too often."

"Really! I should never have thought that!"

Captain Poyning's tone was almost uncivil in the extremity of his surprise.

"Why not?" The query sounded a little coldly.

"Because—— Oh, I don't know. I thought that at Girton you were superior to such things."

"I do not see why—reading-men at Cambridge often dance, and dance very well. Mr. Wilton, your friend at St. Ursula's, is a splendid dancer."

"Does he dance when he is lecturing to you?" The Captain's tone was a little forced in its attempted merriment, and it did not bring a smile to Ida's face; certainly his own expression was not a mirth-provoking one.

"Of course not," she replied with great dignity; "but I have often met him out at my friends' houses."

After this, conversation did not flourish until the setting sun and the slackening pace of their horse caused them to become amicable under the dread of a common misfortune.

"It is past seven, and we must have some distance to go," urged Ida to the driver. "Do make your horse go faster."

But the driver only grinned and cracked his whip, which he had been doing unavailingly every furlong during the six miles they had traversed.

"I think I see something like a station," said Captain Poyning eagerly; "and we shall be in heaps of time."

"I suppose mother and Margaret are at Heidelberg by now, and are just ordering dinner. They will have plenty of time to eat it before we reach them."

She sighed a little nervously, quite unconscious that the train they were hurrying to catch had just drawn up at the junction they had quitted, and that Margaret was eagerly looking out of window for them.

"Mother dear, I can't see either of them anywhere."

"Never mind, my child; they must have gone on by some earlier train which we could not find in our time-table. It was a stupid mistake of mine about the express, but I dare say they have found it out



already, and will wait for us in the Heidelberg station."

As the train steamed into the Heidelberg station, Ida jumped to her feet and arranged her hat.

"If we do not see them on the platform," she said eagerly to Captain Poyning, "we will not wait for the omnibus and all the people with their luggage, but jump into a carriage and drive straight to the Hotel St. Antoine, high up near the castle. Mother always stays there, and if she is very tired she may not come to meet us."

This explanation fully accounted for the empty platform, which they both searched with eager eyes before the train stopped.

"Come at once," cried Ida, springing out of the carriage as soon as it was at a standstill. "Do let us avoid the rush."

She might have added, had she been perfectly sincere, "And the enquiring eyes of people going to our hotel;" but without this explanation her word was law to her companion, consequently they were out of the station before Mrs. Stewart and Margaret, sleeping in the last carriage of the same train, were fully awake to the fact that they had reached their destination.

The hotel officials received them with the mixture of condescension and courtesy which is the peculiar attribute of their class, and the presence of an English-speaking waiter enabled Captain Poyning to make all the necessary enquiries, which must otherwise have fallen to Ida's share; but the most careful enquiry failed to elicit any information productive of ease or of comfort to the travellers. Mrs. Stewart and her daughter were not there, that was the one fact which waiter and porter alike emphatically declared, beginning to cast rather curious glances at the pale, silent lady, with no luggage or similar token of respectability.

"What are we to do?" asked Captain Poyning of her in a low tone.

"Oh, please let us go somewhere else. I may have made a mistake in the name of the hotel."

Once more they re-entered their vehicle, and drove off in very different spirits from those which had marked their arrival. As they proceeded downhill, they dashed past the omnibus of the Hotel St. Antoine, laden with luggage and passengers, amongst others, Mrs. Stewart, Margaret, and an irascible German, whose indignation over a broken box had delayed the whole convoy.

Heidelberg is a city of hotels, and from one to the other drove Captain Poyning and his companion, their spirits sinking lower and lower as they found their efforts everywhere unsuccessful. Once, indeed, Ralph succeeded in unearthing a mother and daughter, who had just arrived. Ida eagerly sprang out of the carriage, which she had refused to leave whilst Captain Poyning was making his enquiries. But the mother and daughter turned out to be an elderly German, with a severe spinster sister, who extremely resented Ida's intrusion when she knocked at their door.

At last, after a fruitless return to the station, they made their last attempt—a forlorn hope—at the hotel which overlooks the railway. By this time Ida had neither energy nor volition left.

"What are we to do?" she asked, lifting up her brimming eyes to the face of her fellow-sufferer, who had just received the usual answer to his enquiries.

"We must get some supper, and stay here till to-morrow," said he, very gently, but very decidedly. "You are nearly worn out now!"

"Oh, indeed, I can't eat!" she protested, as soon as he had paid the coachman, and satisfied the host that they were not as impecunious as external circumstances seemed to imply. "I will go upstairs at once."

"You have eaten nothing for hours," said Ralph, with a quiet resolution which bore down her nervous, excited resistance, "and you must eat before you can do anything else. Come, we shall probably have the dining-room to ourselves at this hour."

He took her shawl from her arm as he spoke, and led her across the parquet-floor to the folding-doors of the dining-room, which, at that particular hotel, consists of a long, narrow conservatory with a glass roof, glass ends, and glass sides, all overgrown with the thickest and greenest of creepers.

Ida obeyed him passively, but could hardly restrain a reproachful glance as he closed the door behind her, for the room was not empty. At a table two people were having supper, obviously English, and they exchanged a meaning glance as Ralph placed a chair for his companion, and proceeded to make every possible arrangement for her comfort.

He ordered their supper, and came back to the table, to sit opposite, and try to charm back a smile to her face by narrating

his attempts at German with the waiter, but she suddenly rose from her chair, pushed it back hurriedly, and said:

"It is so hot here; let us go into the garden."

With a certain serious dignity, which Ralph had never seen in her before, she swept past the English couple, and out into the small garden.

Overhead, the moon and stars were shining in silent glory, and all around lights were still burning in the hotel windows. When once she was secure that she was out of the sight and hearing of the strangers, she hurried to a garden-seat and sank back with a gasping sob. Before Ralph could speak to her, a voice, clear, jarring, and inharmonious, broke upon their ears from within the dining-room.

"Brother and sister! My dear Percy, you are blind! Of course they are a bridal couple! I only wish you were half as devoted as he."

A painful silence ensued. At last it was broken by a low sound. Ida had laid her head upon the back of the garden-seat, and was sobbing convulsively.

Ralph's throat was dry, and his heart—full of a genuine, generous love—could find no words to help or soothe her.

"Come, Miss Stewart," he said after a little, "I am sure you are too brave to be unhappy about such a trifle. Think—it will be all right to-morrow, and we shall be recounting our mistakes and enjoying them—Mrs. Stewart most of all."

It cost him a considerable effort to speak thus, for far other and stronger impulses were in his mind; but his firmness had its reward.

Ida's sobs ceased, and she looked up penitently.

"Indeed I am ashamed of myself. I shall never be able to show you how grateful I am for all your kindness."

"The hotel people think you are my sister," he said. "I have not told them so, but I have not undeceived them. You won't mind appearing in that character for a few hours?"

"Indeed," Ida said with a pretty earnestness which ought to have gratified him more than it seemed to do, "I wish I were so always. I have never before guessed how much I missed in having no brother."

Her braver mood endured whilst they ate their supper in the deserted room, and did not desert her until she had wished him good-night; then, when she was alone,

she hid her face in her hands, and cried with the absolute despair of childhood.

Her face, however, was bright and smiling when she lingered for a moment next morning—a little nervous at entering the dining-room—her hand on the lock of the door.

Whilst she was still hesitating, Captain Poyning sauntered up. He had been waiting for her in order to spare her the awkwardness of entering by herself.

"Good-morning," she said; and then, as she put her hand in his, she added in a whisper: "Do you think that dreadful woman is there?"

Before he could answer, she had opened the door, and seen the lady in question; but, far from showing fear or embarrassment, Ida seemed to gain courage from the sight.

"Have you ordered breakfast?" she asked in her clear, low tones. "At which table is it?"

"I have chosen one by an open window," said Ralph, making his way to one at the far corner of the room.

There was much for them to discuss over their coffee and bread-and-butter—although there was little difference of opinion between them as to the course to be pursued.

"First I am to go to the station and telegraph to Holzdorf; then bring a carriage to the door, so that we may make enquiries again at all the Heidelberg hotels; and then, if everything else fails, you will go back this afternoon to Frau Müller. I think I understand," said Captain Poyning as if he were repeating a lesson. "But are you sure that a drive in the heat will not tire you too much?"

Ida shook her head.

"If you were to leave me alone in the hotel with that person, I should die, I am sure; she is too terrible."

"Do you mind being in her society whilst I go to the station?" asked Ralph, feeling no small pleasure in daring to speak as if his presence were a pleasure or a comfort to her.

"Oh yes! I do not mean to be a trouble. But please be quick."

Captain Poyning obeyed.

Ida, as soon as she was alone, began to finish her coffee in rather a hurried fashion. Before she could leave her seat, her countrywoman had sailed across to her. As she came nearer, it was easy to discover that she was on her bridal tour—a fact she made considerable efforts to

reveal by the smartness of her attire and the newness of her wedding-ring.

"Good-morning!" she said to Ida, who instinctively hid her left hand under the table. "I found out you were English yesterday, and I thought I should be so thankful to hear my own language again that I came across to speak to you."

Ida could not do less than incline her head courteously, but she would not do more.

"Oh, I knew you were English directly you and your husband came into the room. Have you been long abroad?"

"Six weeks," answered Ida in a very dry tone, uninviting of question or confidence.

"Dear me! Now, we were only—I mean, we only left England on Saturday last. Six weeks! It is quite an age, isn't it?"

To this Ida vouchsafed no answer whatever; but, as the lady's desire was to impart, and not to receive information, she was quite undaunted.

"I mean, quite an age when one is first married," with a very affected laugh. "I know everyone must guess the truth about us, because Percy is so absurdly attentive."

Ida could bear no more, but fled from the room, and, throwing on her hat, rushed out of the hotel, with some vague idea of putting as much space as possible between herself and her tormentor. She could not see Captain Poyning anywhere, and whilst she was making her way to the railway-station, she was startled by a cry of "Ida, is it you?" Before she could realise the meaning of the words, Margaret's arms were round her neck, and Margaret's tearful face was pressed to hers.

"Mamma has gone to the telegraph-office. She was just going to telegraph to Holzdorf."

As she spoke, Mrs. Stewart and Captain Poyning appeared in sight together, and in a moment the mother and daughter were in one another's arms, quite forgetful of everything but the joy of meeting.

It was very long before Mrs. Stewart could be brought to understand how the mistakes had arisen, or even of what they exactly consisted, although she is now very fond of relating, with some detail, the extraordinary way in which she, Margaret, and Ida once travelled in the same train, and never saw one another.

Everyone knows the terrace at Heidelberg, with its outlook over the roofs down upon the winding river. Somehow it looked fairer than ever upon that September day when Ralph and Ida turned back for one last glance.

"And we part company here," he said regretfully, and waited as if for an answer; but Ida said nothing, only looked more longingly than before at the sunny scene.

"I shall be in England in November," he went on, in a rather disconnected fashion, and very low tone, although there was no one nearer than Mrs. Stewart and Margaret at the other end of the terrace, "and I think I shall go and see Wilton at Cambridge. He has often asked me. May I come and see you at Girton if I do? You see," with a great effort, "I take such a lot of interest in everything connected with you."

He had not meant to close his sentence thus, but the truth was too strong for him, and the interest in all matters appertaining to women's education, which he had intended to express, was quite swallowed up by a mere personal feeling. His hearer did not, however, seem displeased, or even regretful, as she turned towards him her face, beautiful with trust and affection.

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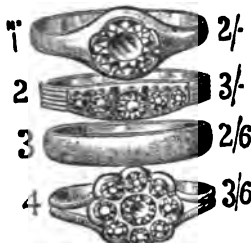
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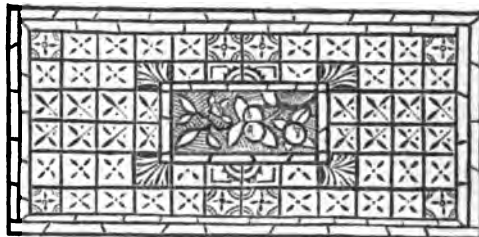
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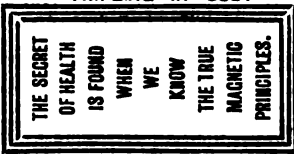
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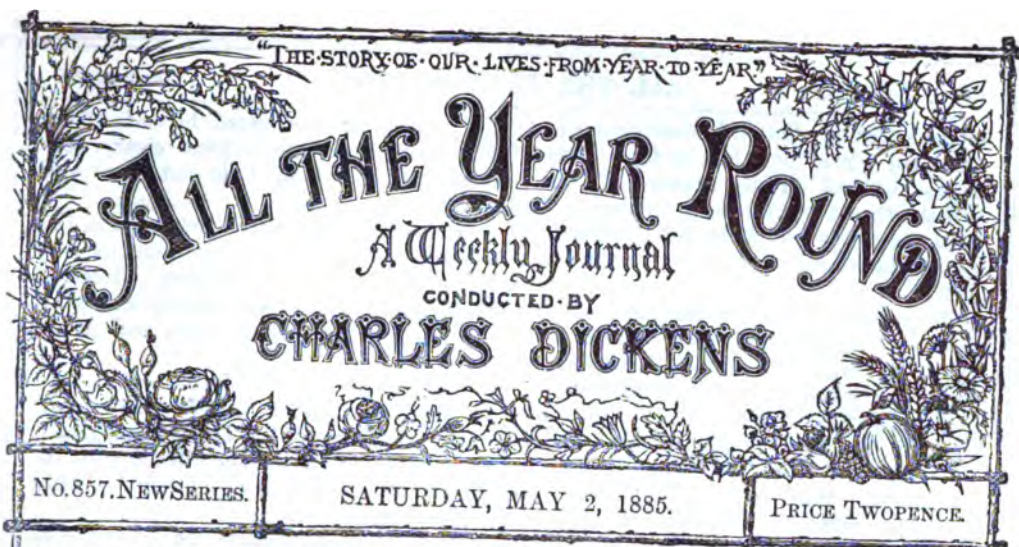
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### CHAPTER XIII. THE DEATH'S HEAD IN THE FLOWER.

It was Bernarda's first night under her husband's roof.

They had not gone straight home; it would be hardly fair to the servants to take them by surprise, he said, and he wished her first impression to be a pleasant one. So they put up at an inn for two days, on the third going to Edgeworth's house, to find servants smiling a welcome, lights blazing, flowers in profusion, all things wearing a gala look in honour of the bride.

During the two last days the pair had seen very little of each other, Edgeworth only once alluding to the business in hand.

"The black flag has been hauled down for a while," was all he said, and he said it with an evident desire not to be questioned.

Bernarda was undressing then on that first night in her new home, when her attention was suddenly arrested by an object, curious, even phenomenal, that must have been placed by unknown hands on her dressing-table during dinner-time.

It was an artificial flower, a magnificent pansy, in the little crystal vase that had held the flower she now wore. At first the uncommon size and splendour of the heartsease excited admiration only, and she bent over it with a cry of delight and amazement.

But as she gazed and gazed, fascinated yet repelled by something abnormal in its appearance she could not explain, rapture

was turned to dismay, till she drew back horror-stricken. It was no flower at all that she gazed on, but a death's head in miniature.

The imitation was indeed a miracle of the artificer's skill in wax; most ingeniously had the flower-head been copied, yet so far modified, both in form and colour, as nicely to represent, on a reduced scale, a human skull. The petals were of greyish white, and the markings, representing the hollows, in dark brown, the whole, at first sight, looking a mere scientific toy in its exquisite modelling and accurately laid on tints.

But it became a ghastly emblem in Bernarda's eyes, as she turned to it again and again. The most innocent things may become horrible when turned into symbols, and this mimic death's head in wax a child might have unconsciously toyed with, gradually shut out every cheerful image from her mind. She soon saw nothing else in the room. This symbolic flower, surreptitiously placed in the chamber of Edgeworth's bride on her home-coming, made her cheek blanch and her limbs tremble.

What else could it be but a warning? and in those first moments of alarm and foreboding she thought only of her husband. It was his safety, his life, she now saw threatened. The defaulter, the waverer, the recalcitrant was already a doomed man.

When she could collect her thoughts a little the omen wore a wholly different aspect, and she could but feel convinced that it was placed there as a threat to herself. Edgeworth might be regarded as a possible renegade by his followers, but on whom would their vengeance naturally fall? Not on the leader, rather on the wife who was the cause of his apostasy. Renegade he was not yet, perhaps he



might never be; Bernarda dared not count upon her power over him so far. Nevertheless, he had already drawn back once, and the threat was meant in this wise: she must cease to influence her husband or she would be called upon to pay the last forfeit.

Misinterpretation of the fact was impossible. There symbolised, it was true by a flower, yet evidently intended to symbolise, was the price to be paid for her husband's redemption. She might save him, or try to save him, if she would, but her own life must be yielded in exchange. Her first impulse was to carry the hideous travesty to Edgeworth and tell him all. But she hesitated in painful conflict. She could not thus bear to overshadow his joy in this home-coming, for joy it evidently was to him in spite of the dark, troubled thoughts that ever and anon came to cloud it. There was something odious, moreover, in the notion of having to confess to a feeling of insecurity under his roof.

She dreaded the storm of vindictive passion such a revelation would be sure to call forth.

Yet she hesitated. What if any harm should happen to her, Edgeworth being unwarned? Would he ever forgive her? Would she be able to forgive herself?

On a sudden she heard his footsteps on the stairs, and seizing the hateful thing, buried it, shattered to fragments, under the smouldering ashes.

"You look ruffled," Edgeworth said, coming in. "Has anything vexed you?"

She bent low over the tiny vase, in which she was now placing the flower she had worn at dinner—a gorgeous heartsease of velvety purple, starred with deep gold.

"Your own imagination is to blame," she said with forced gaiety. "Why did you ever make me see a death's head in my favourite flower? Just before you came in I could see one distinctly. The illusion is gone now."

Edgeworth frowned; the thought struck him that some inattention on the part of his household might have annoyed her. And the fire had been allowed to burn low. He stooped to make it up.

"Marion should be here, anyhow," he said, without a suspicion of the truth.

The notion, it was clear, had never occurred to him that anything of this kind could have happened in his house.

"I did not want Marion; it is good to be alone sometimes," Bernarda answered,

not having yet recovered herself. "Go downstairs and smoke your cigar, dear Edgeworth. Indeed, I do not want you now."

He had come to search for cigars in the adjoining room, and now left her, to reopen the door a moment after. Stealing up to the white-draped, dreamy figure by the fireplace, he bent down and whispered:

"You have no regrets?"

"Oh, leave me, dear!" she cried. "Regrets—regrets! Turn blackguard, drink yourself into a sot, kill me with ill-usage, and I should have no regrets; only leave me now."

A word as passionate he had also to say.

"The very walls must not hear me," he said, speaking under his breath. "Yet I must speak. Listen, love. You will never change me, but a taste of happiness has made me greedy. This settling down is a mere blind, a pretence. Hold yourself, therefore, in readiness for a sudden start. Three months of my life, at least, you shall have—you who are my life indeed!"

He vanished, and with these terribly vehement words the scales fell from the wife's eyes. Now, for the first time, she read her husband's inmost soul.

A wild clutching after happiness, and a desire to soothe her so far as to make such compromise possible—these, then, were the reasons that actuated him now, rather than any hesitation on moral grounds. He could exult in the thought of a delicious holiday with her in some sweet Southern land—a honeymoon indefinitely prolonged, whilst deliberately resolved to return to his former career, and, in one sense, and that the deepest, live apart from her for ever. This respite was to be a respite from deeds of violence and crime—a mere truce he was willing to sign for her sake.

She could deceive herself no longer. Their love for each other could never save him, but in one way. What if this overmastering joy were to be turned to bitterest anguish? What if the next victim, singled out by the dark Vehmgericht to which he belonged, should be his love, his wife? Would he not quail then? Would he not refuse to move another step in the path he had hitherto followed so relentlessly? Awful as were these thoughts, Edgeworth desolate, Edgeworth frenzied with grief, they were far more endurable to her than those suggested by his tumultuously joyous words. Happiness, sunshine, sweetest com-

panionship, whilst conscience slept! No. Welcome instead—a thousand times welcome—the death's-head, with its moral pointed at her, thought the pale, haughty Bernarda, as she braced herself up to tremendous self-control and a silence nothing should permit her to break.

Edgeworth, blindly clutching after careless love and joy, should be allowed to go his own way. She would never point out the hidden danger. He should never know that this temporary lapse, this apparent dereliction on his part was to be avenged in the person of his wife. Death for Bernarda had few terrors; life, fewer seductions still. Whilst a vestige of hope had remained to her of checking her husband's awful career, life was very precious for his sake. When it became plain past doubt that love to her meant one thing, to him another, that the affection he had to give her had no soul in it at all, since he thought to love and be loved, yet could live unworthily; then she had no refuge to fly to but the desperate hope of saving him through suffering and self-sacrifice.

Marion's presence came as a relief to these agonised thoughts. The singing girl soon appeared beaming with happiness; no daintier, fairer abigail imaginable than the blonde, rosy Marion in her new pink gown and coquettish white muslin apron.

"Shall you be happy, think you?" asked her mistress; "are your fellow-servants good people?"

"So good," said the girl, kissing a fold of Bernarda's dressing-gown; "we have had quite a party downstairs in honour of your return. Each of us had leave to invite a friend—that made eight, and what with the champagne and the singing, my head goes round."

"And who was your friend?" asked Bernarda.

"My tenor, of course," replied the little maiden, blushing to her pretty ears.

"Well, Marion must take care of her old mistress," Bernarda said sadly, and under one pretext and another she retained the girl near her, till she heard Edgeworth moving in the next room.

Much as she needed solitude, it seemed unendurable to her in this house which was now her home.

#### CHAPTER XIV. REDEEMED.

No more eager or confident figure than Edgeworth's threaded the London streets on New Year's Day. So far everything

had prospered according to his wishes. He had never for a moment hoped to manipulate affairs with such success. His absence for a time seemed now comparatively easy, and even departure need not be precipitate or secret, only that he preferred ever to act precipitately and secretly. In the least thing he preferred not to take the world into his confidence. None of his household, therefore, not even Marion, knew that the master and mistress were to start for a foreign trip next day; Bernarda did not know it as yet, and the extravagantly buoyant Edgeworth was now hastening home to tell her.

He pictured her joy at the news. To be free to live for each other for twelve long weeks, three whole months; would not Bernarda be almost satisfied then? Loving him as she did, she must be ready to accept such a full measure of happiness, and leave the rest for a time.

To his extreme discomfiture Bernarda was absent with Marion—no one knew anything of her movements. Edgeworth's nature was one that resented checks. He liked, moreover, with all a lover's jealous fondness, to be informed of his wife's movements beforehand. It piqued him that she should not tell him exactly where she was to be found, and after what manner occupied, at any hour of the day.

Something, moreover, in her demeanour of late had troubled him, a dreaminess, a disposition to brood—a habit she had contracted of seeming aloof from him when they were together. He tried to account for this change, as arising from a natural feeling of strangeness that might overtake her on first coming to his home. Perhaps even—she was far too brave and too proud to give utterance to such a sentiment—she felt a certain insecurity under his roof. Well, then, it was time for both to get away for a time.

It was highly characteristic of him that he could thus shake off the trammels of self-enforced duty; so much the better—or the worse—for his cause, he said recklessly.

Without any apparent effort he could thus make a compromise with gravest issues, and purchase a brief spell of happiness, perhaps, from his own point of view, at the price of disaster to his country, his party's collapse.

Only to be free with Bernarda! To live lazily in some sweet place with her for a little while! Then they might bid him commit what deeds they would! But

why this prolonged absence on her part from home?

After fuming and fretting for an hour, at last it occurred to him that, of course, Bernarda had gone to her old home. This forthcoming journey had been mooted. She knew that departure, when it came, would be hurried. She had, of course, gone to the school to fetch things she had not brought away with her as yet, or, perhaps, she had made an appointment with her successor there. For the embroidery-school was to be carried on as before, and Bernarda's successor was to take possession after the holidays.

Feeling that it must be so, yet not quite easy in his mind, he waited a little, then determined to go after her at once. The way was short, and he knew it so well! How often—oh, how often he had made it with wild hopes in his heart Bernarda never guessed. Strange this story of theirs! To meet after such an absence, to come together again after such a separation.

As he hastened up the well-known street, his heart bounded at the thought of seeing her.

She would come out to meet him, scold him, satirise him as of old. They would live over again that playful, earnest moment when existence to two beings is made up half of understanding, half of expectation.

"Erna, Erna," he said, as he let himself in with the latch-key, "what are you hiding yourself for?"

Silence reigned throughout the place, but it was plain that Bernarda and Marion had been there. On the hall-table stood the little basket and umbrella of the singing-girl; she had evidently come in with some purchases and gone out again. Two or three packages were also heaped together by the door ready for removal. The pair had been packing up some things Bernarda wished to take to her new home, and Marion had now gone out for a fly.

That was all the mystery. Bernarda had most likely over-tired herself, and was drowsing on the sofa. Why, then, should he feel discomposure, much less consternation? A house could hardly be alive with noise if only one person were quietly resting in it. Yet why should Marion thus leave her mistress alone in this big, empty, dreary house? Why did Bernarda go there without consulting him?

"Do, my love, wake up. Come, we will have tea out of the shamrock cups," he cried, when opening the door of her little sitting-room, he found all as he had said.

She had over-tired herself with this final settling-up of affairs in her old home, and was merely resting on the sofa till Marion came.

Yet she was not wont to look so pale, and that crimson flower worn on her heart had a strange aspect in his eyes. He was accustomed to her fancy for wearing a pansy, and on first entering the dimly-lighted room, took the bright blotch of colour to be a heartsease of unusual brilliance, nothing more. Why, then, should it strike terror into his soul?

He stood for a moment without the power to speak or move. Then he rushed forward and fell kneeling by the side of the couch, with a horrible imprecation that died away in a despairing appeal. No natural pallor was that blanching Bernarda's cheeks. No pansy she wore on her bosom now. Her flower of predilection was indeed a flower of doom.

The crimson stain was a stain of blood, and the hushed sleep was that from which there is no awakening. Only one consolatory thought visited the frenzied Edgeworth now as, kneeling by her side, he called upon his dead love again and again. In those first moments of crazy grief and blank despair, he yet noted with something akin to fierce exultation that the blow had been swiftly, surely dealt. No flitting of the spirit from its mortal part could be fleetier than such a death. Bernarda had died for him—he understood it all; but without suffering or struggle. Never had nobler heart been struck at with less erring aim, never stainless soul liberated from its clayey envelope more instantaneously.

#### CONCLUSION.

ALL night long before the bearing to the tomb, Edgeworth kept lonely watch by his wife's side. They had laid her with a certain state in the lofty and spacious workroom over which she had presided so long; but what a contrast did it now present to the atelier of former days! Instead of avenues of brilliant exotics, and rosy, fair-haired maidens gracefully grouped about their embroidery-frames, the place was turned into a black-draped mortuary chamber, with one sombre, death-still figure kneeling by the coffin.

On the estrade, Bernarda's place, a temporary altar had been erected, on which wax-lights were kept perpetually burning.

Well did the prostrate Edgeworth harmonise with these funeral surroundings. He wore a long mourning-cloak wrapped

round his limbs, and the intense pallor of his complexion served to heighten the jetty blackness of his hair and beard.

How those awful hours passed he knew not. All too short were they for the distracted man, who felt, somehow, that Bernarda had not as yet wholly left him. Whilst he could passionately kiss the cold outside of her coffin, he seemed to be near her still. But when that last desperate consolation was gone—ah! what would become of him then? There would only be one way of living and bearing his solitude. He could love no more, but he could hate indeed! Here, and here only, he saw a harbour of refuge. What religion, what conviction, what duty, could not do, fiercest hatred might accomplish. For the sake of avenging Bernarda's death, he might find life endurable.

From these fearful thoughts he was aroused soon after the dawning of the cold, grey, wintry day, by strange, sweet sounds as of girls singing. Almost unearthly sweet fell these strains on Edgeworth's ears, and soon he was to know whence they came. Softly the door of the atelier opened, and there appeared all Bernarda's flower-maidens, led by Marion, in solemn procession. They were dressed in black and white, and carried garlands of white flowers, which each singer deposited on the coffin as they slowly filed by. Then, when the last wreath was placed, making a pyramidal heap of white azaleas, tuberoses, stephanotis, pelargonium, jasmine, and camellia, the plaintive, wailing melody with which they had been marshalled round the room ceased, and full-throated, clear, and rich rose the chant of these girl-choristers as they stood in a semi-circle around their dead mistress. Edgeworth never changed his kneeling attitude by the coffin. He did not weep, or show by the moving of a muscle that the singing touched him; immovable as a statue he remained whilst these young fair girls, having poured out their grief in a passionate threnody, now broke into exultant strains over the joys of the beautiful soul, set free from its earthly toils. At first, indeed, in the fierce jealousy of his grief, he had felt inclined to resent this initiative on Marion's part, yet the guileless voices and looks of the girls disarmed his vindictive mood. They had also their little right to love Bernarda.

The last strain ended, all became still, except for the low, hushed sobbing of the

girls as they looked their last adieu before passing out of the room.

Not yet did Edgeworth weep; albeit the music had touched him. It seemed a reproach to his own evil mood. He felt at last as if the angels had gone, leaving only a demon wearing human shape to keep watch by Bernarda's bier. The dark man trembled before the self-evoked image.

How could he stay in this august presence—how could he leave it for ever—with these awful curses on his lips and in his heart?

"Erna—love—wife," he cried at last, as his soul was poured out in passionate tears, "for thy sake the wild joy of revenge I had counted on shall never be! Unstained with blood, this hand I lay upon thy bier; unstained with blood—I swear it!—this hand shall ever place immortelles on thy tomb!"

From that day, Edgeworth, the anarchist, the dynamiter, the revolutionary, disappeared from the scenes in which he had moved, a familiar figure, as completely as if he had been struck down by some dark hand. All kinds of surmises and rumours got abroad concerning him. Report said that in a certain Continental monastery still left undisturbed, one of a cowed brotherhood wedded to perpetual austereness answered to the description of the well-known conspirator. Travellers brought word of a physiognomy and accent not to be mistaken, which they had accidentally met with when inspecting one of the celebrated monastic foundations of France.

Edgeworth yet lived, but a life that was a living death. The fanaticism characterising the conspirator now found vent in dire macerations and self-inflicted tortures, recalling the flagellants of the Middle Ages. His fierce, agonised soul sought to forget itself or purge itself in bodily suffering—so, at least, asserted some who had known the Edgeworth of other days, and declared now that they had recognised his living phantom in monkish guise.

Others would have it that he had purchased a vast rancho in the wilds of America, and was trying to expend his wild energies and splendid physical powers in the adventurous career of a ranchman. Here again the alleged testimony of eye-witnesses was forthcoming. Extraordinary stories were recounted of his exploits and prowess. The fiercest suns, the most incredible hardships, could not daunt him. He seemed to enjoy a charmed

life, and to revel in the daily perils to which he exposed it.

Yet a third surmise gained wider acceptance still. It was affirmed that the conspirator had never quitted his old haunts in Europe at all, but that under various names and disguises he contrived to elude alike friend and enemy, and to play a desperate part. No one had been able to identify him in any of the European capitals. No one could give a clue to his whereabouts.

That he lived, and was close at hand, many were ready to swear. And if no bloodguiltiness could be attributed to him, the part with which he was accredited was yet dark. The plotter now plotted against his followers, his former creeds. Whenever some revolutionary enterprise miscarried, or some deep-laid scheme was revealed, he was said to be at the bottom of the disclosure. The arch-conspirator of former days now lived but to frustrate conspiracies. For the sake of his murdered wife, who had endeavoured to change his purpose, he had become the deadliest enemy of his old associates.

One vague rumour more. Bernarda had been laid to rest, not in one of the great cemeteries of the world, but in a quiet graveyard far away from London. She was buried near that old-world town, by the sea to which he had taken her a bride. Certain of the fisher-folk declared that there was one night of the year on which a dark figure kept watch from sunset to dawn by the grave perpetually planted with heartsease—the grave of the strange lady whose remains had been brought thither not long ago.

One thing was true enough. On one grave dotting that green burial-ground above the sea, bloomed ever Bernarda's pansy—the Flower of Doom!

### MADAGASCAR.

MADAGASCAR is a puzzle to the physical geographer. So close to Africa that those who believe in the future of the Dark Continent tell us it will be thereto what England has been to Europe, it is almost wholly distinct from it in plants, and animals, and human inhabitants. Mr. Wallace thinks it was once joined to Africa by an isthmus, of which the Comoros are the remains; but for ages the Mozambique Channel has prevented the big African beasts from going across, and now the

whole fauna and (except the baobab) the flora are not African at all. Bones are found of big birds, as in Mauritius and the other Mascarenes, which therefore must have been joined on to Madagascar, while the vegetation—pitcher-plants, orchids, etc.—is so like that of Borneo that some imagine a lost continent, Lemuria, of which Rodriguez and the Chagos and Cocos are mountain-peaks, and which, with Borneo and Madagascar at its two ends, formed a pendant to the Atlantis of Greek tradition.

Madagascar is peopled partly with negritos—the same race as the Papuans and other Melanesians,—partly with Polynesians (Malays), who in speech come very near the Samoans and Tonga islanders. The speech, indeed, all through the island is much the same, though a Hova, even if he has not taken to wearing a coat and trousers and carrying a watch, is very unlike a Bara, who wears his hair in a central knob as big as a tennis-ball, surrounded by from ten to a hundred smaller knobs, all hardened up with fat, and wax, and whitening, and who has huge wooden earrings, and a necklace of little wooden balls mixed with beads. How these negritos came in, nobody knows; they must date from the days of the dodo. One can account for the lighter race, for Polynesians have always been great sailors. Malacca had its restless spirits, its vikings, who swarmed out from every creek, seeking either a new home or a new plundering ground. They reached New Zealand; they colonised island after island of the South Seas; and one of their marauding fleets, caught in the western "trade," was driven on the south-east corner of Madagascar, whence, conquering as they went, they moved up to the table-land of Imerina, and founded Antananarivo (the city of the thousand villages). That is how the Hovas came in; and they were, probably, by no means the earliest of these unintentional invaders. But everything about Madagascar is guess-work till Marco Polo mentions it as Magaster. Then, in 1506, Almeida, Portuguese envoy to the Indies, visited it; and, in 1642, the French and English both made settlements. We soon abandoned ours; the French kept theirs up, and have ever since, on and off, meddled in Malagasy matters.

In 1773, a Pole, Count Benyowsky, asked leave of the French, and formed a settlement in the north of the island. He got immensely popular among the natives, and at a grand gathering of tribes

was chosen King of all the Malagasy, the people protesting that in him one of their old chiefs had come to life again. The French did not like this; so they stirred up strife in which Benyowsky was killed. The Malagasy might well reverence him, for most of the white men whom they had to do with were by no means loveable characters. Our own Robert Drury, son of a London tavern-keeper, was no better than the French and Portuguese, who vied with one another, and with the Arabs from the Comoros, in behaving as "pioneers of civilisation" usually do. Drury had run away to sea, and his ship was wrecked in 1702 on the south-east of the island. The crew were saved, and were so kindly treated that they thought they were being fattened up for the slave-market. They therefore turned on their kind hosts, and, seizing the chief and several more as hostages, entrenched themselves. But they had no food or water, and at last only Drury and two or three more were left. He was made a slave of, and by-and-by escaped to the coast, having had no ill-treatment to complain of, except once when he refused to join in prayer to his master's idols. Coming home he wrote a book denouncing slavery and idolatry; but in a few years he sailed back, and himself became an eager slave-dealer.

Early in this century the principal chief of the Hovas, getting, perhaps, from some trader a confused account of what Bonaparte had done, united the twelve Hova clans, got himself appointed King by the name of Radama the First, began bringing the other tribes under Hova rule, and made a treaty with England with the view of driving the French out of the island. He made an English officer, Brady, his commander-in-chief, and his merciless campaigns against the Betsileo, and other tribes, reduced the population so much that it is still considerably less than when this "mighty conqueror" came to the throne. Brady, too, had a Tarquin's ideas of pacifying a tribe. "Kill all the young men," he said to his army, as it was marching south. "How high must they have grown to be worth killing!" Brady stretched out his arm, meaning that no one should escape who could not pass under it. As he was a short man, the slaughter was terrible. The Betsileo soon submitted, so did most of the other tribes, the Sakalava "long-cats" alone making much resistance. When Radama was dead, his wife succeeded as Ranavalona the First. She still

further diminished the population by her wholesale religious persecutions. The rock over which the Christians were flung makes one think of the Pappenberg, as the Dutch nicknamed the mountain over which the Japanese Christians were hurled. But Christianity was leavening the whole lump; and when Ranavalona died, and persecution ceased, it grew so strong that within eight years the national idols, or rather fetishes, were publicly burnt. What these idols were is not certainly known, for nobody was allowed to look inside the boxes, about a foot long, in which they were kept. When brought out, each box, covered with red cloth, and decked with silver charms, silver balls, pieces of coral, and ornaments shaped like shark's teeth, was fastened to a long pole, and carried under a velvet canopy. Though wonderfully constant under persecution, the Hova Christian is not of a very high type. Mr. Little, a missionary, whose book is full of interesting facts about hitherto unknown parts of the island, laments their bumptiousness, and greed, and lack of self-denial. Their teachers, he says, ought to be more frank with them about the necessity for thoroughness and plodding.

The white man's example has seldom been edifying. Fancy a steamer, having on board a mixed cargo of missionaries, Bibles, and Mauritius rum—the most poisonous spirit ever distilled! The late Queen tried to keep out a poison which was undermining the health of her subjects; but the spirit-merchants are a powerful body, and our Government says: "You shall not keep out Mauritius rum," just as in China it has said, "You shall not keep out Indian opium." The prime minister, Rainilaiarivony, husband of the present as he was of the late Queen, complains grievously; and well he may, when it is, says Mr. Little, no uncommon thing to find a whole village drunk with toaka (rum). Wages are paid in rum; rum buys the bullocks that are sent by the shipload to the Mauritius. The late Queen was most anxious that our Queen, "her sister," should herself order the English to abstain from this unholy traffic; but, of course, as her Majesty reigns but does not govern, nothing so subversive of the British Constitution as such interference could be attempted.

Like many other nations, savage and civilised, the Hovas do not allow a foreigner to buy freehold land. He may take a life-lease, but no more.

The late French consul, Laborde, had a coffee estate granted him by Radama the Second; he understood it as a gift out and out, and left it to his heir. But the Government stepped in and said: "No; the land is ours. The late consul had only the right of occupation." The heir insisted, and was supported by the new French consul. This was in 1880; and there were pleadings and counter-pleadings, till at last, in June, 1883, the French tried the *lex ultima regum*, as war is called in the inscriptions on old cannon. How will it end? Radama the First, who hated the French, said he wasn't afraid of them, for he had two generals—Tazo (the fever) and Hazo (the forest)—who could keep any number of white men at bay. But since then the irrepressible white man has bearded Tazo, and shorn Hazo's locks to such a degree, that already a forest conservancy is needed. The fever is, however, a terrible affair, not only in itself but in its after-results; and the thirst of gain must be very strong to risk the utter prostration and total wreck of the system which often follow an attack. The uplands and great central forests are tolerably healthy, but crops pay best on the belt of rich seaboard, and labour—chiefly imported—is most easily got there. So the European "boss" fixes himself where even the Hova garrisons sicken and die, and where the sailor's nicknames, "Dead Island," "Churchyard," "Frenchmen's grave," show what is the character of the climate. If he never tastes spirits, and uses the tepid herb bath, which is the native remedy, and never stirs out, even for a few minutes, without a helmet and thick two-fold umbrella, he may have the disease in a mild form; but in some form or other he is bound to have it. Nor does it attack the planter and factory-clerk only; the temperance and self-devotion of the missionary cannot save him. The saddest picture in Mr. Little's book is that of a fever-stricken missionary, dying on a straw-truss, forgotten by the crew, on board one of those Mauritius bullock ships—condemned hulks, with no Plimsoll to look after them—the voyage on which is the worst of purgatories even to a man in rude health.

I said just now "imported labour," for the native does not yet see the duty of working steadily in order that the white man may make a big pile. The Hova has altogether too good an opinion of himself to turn day-labourer; he will make you a

fairly useful harmonium, and try his hand at a violin—nay, he sets up as a watch-maker, and is offended if you send your timepiece to Mauritius to be cleaned. Mr. Little, anxious to encourage native skill, had two valuable chronometers "ruined with the best intentions" by a Hova workman. Nor do the wilder tribes care for steady work. When a Sakalava, or a Tanala, or a Bara has earned a few dollars, he beats them out flat, and nails them on to his gunstock, or else he cuts them up to make beads for his sweetheart's neck, or else the little silver oxen that are stuck all over her chignon. The cry, therefore, among the white settlers is, "Send us East Indian coolies."

If I were autocrat of inter-tropical Africa, I would organise a series of slave-merchant hunts, drafting off the fellows as I caught them to work in the Madagascar fever districts, not at sugar-growing, but at clearing away the river-bars, cutting drains, planting blue gum-trees, and otherwise sanitating. In this way the Madagascar seaboard would, in time, become fairly healthy; and the work is not by any means so hopeless as it is along some of the West African coasts, for instance. There is not much of that mangrove swamp which must be the despair of sanitary engineers; a great deal of the deadliest country in Madagascar is beautiful and park-like, with lovely freshwater lakes separated, some by only a few feet, others by four or five miles, from the Indian Ocean. Radama the First planned a canal uniting them all, and gathered a host of diggers, who were not to go back to their villages till the work was done. But popular feeling was too strong even for him. One day the workmen stood aghast; blood oozed out of the trench that they were digging, and cries issued from the ground; the gods were clearly saying "No," and therefore the canal was abandoned.

With such a regiment as I have suggested, and with determined "bosses" to keep them up to their work, I would soon sanitize that deadly coast, and I would have a railway and a telegraph, and free trade in everything except ardent spirits. It is sad to think of the Malagasy being killed out by drink, for they are (Hovas most of all) a kindly folk, and as ceremonious as the Samoans, with whom their speech identifies them. They are as fond of "perhaps," as a Cornishman is of "perhaps so," or a Scot of "aiblins," and their

courtesy at times becomes oppressive, as when passing a man in a narrow road (and roads are a weak point even close to the capital) you cannot escape without a whole set of enquiries about your health, and of hopes, not only for your success in your present journey, but for your long life and decent burial. And it is such a soft, all-vowels-speech, like the music that the Pacific on a calm day makes on a coral reef, that there is no wonder the Malagasy find it hard to give up their names and take Scripture ones. What pretty girl would not rather be called Totósy (mouse), or even Mamba (crocodile), than Sarah Anne or Keziah! The result is a compromise; one finds Ra-Caleb, or Ra-Mary, like that Sandwich island chief, whom his friends wanted to christen "Darer of devils in the dark," while the missionaries insisted on calling him Jeremiah, and who, to satisfy both, was called "Jeremiah in the dark." If the speech is Polynesian, so is the taboo (called here "fady"); and there is the same abstinence from certain meats by certain families. One clan must not eat beef, another is forbidden to eat manioc, and so on, "totemism" being at the bottom of the restrictions, the forbidden thing being the sacred emblem or great ancestor of the abstaining clan.

Painting there is plenty of among the wilder tribes. A Bara belle touches up her eyebrows with chalk, and on great occasions whitens her whole face, leaving only nose and eyelids their natural colour. Human sacrifices were given up when European (especially English) influences penetrated deeply, under Radama the First. "The covenant of blood" (a Dyak custom also) still exists. You and I just prick the skin near our hearts, and drink a drop of one another's blood; thenceforth we are more than brothers. Of cannibalism there is no trace; indeed, on the whole, the people are very gentle. Slavery is very general, slaves being usually debtors or purchased foreigners. A good deal of kidnapping, however, is carried on in the island itself by Comoro Arabs. A trader hires a servant-lad for a rice-gathering tour up one of the big rivers. All goes well until they get into a new tribe, and there the Arab immediately puts the lad up for sale. He appeals to the village headman, saying he is no slave, but a hired servant; but, as slaves generally talk in that way when masters want to sell them away from home, the headman seldom interferes. The boy is sold, and next time

the Arab gets to the place from which he lured him, he calls on his parents, and, with a blandly sympathetic voice, says, as he slips a dollar into the mother's hand, "Poor fellow! he would bathe, though I often warned him, and at last the crocodile got him;" or else he invents an upset of the "dug-out," or an attack of fever. Slaves are kindly treated. If they have a trade, they can work on their own account, paying a share to their masters; nay, they are trusted to travel in search of work from one end of the island to the other, it being understood that they will send back their quota, or bring it with them on their return.

I should like to see one of the great central forests, with its magnificent camphor-wood, rosewood, ebony, and other hard woods; its indiarubber creepers, and its orchids, some of which bring ninety pounds a plant in the English market. The wild cat; a dog with extra-strong fore-claws and contracting pupils, as if it were developing into a creature of the cat tribe; the mythical songom, as big as a donkey, and spotted with red; lemurs of various sorts; a spider with so strong a web that birds are caught in it; hedgehogs; big tortoises; snakes, some perfectly white, but none venomous; very few birds; butterflies the finest in the world; but none of the tsetse, or other African flies—that is a catalogue of the chief living things. As in New Zealand, the silence of the Madagascar "bush" is painful—there is no hum of insects, no note of feathered songsters. But, then, you are safe; there is no venomous creature, except the foka, a small spider, for the few scorpions and centipedes (probably imported) are not very dangerous.

Free from fever, the uplands were no safeguard against smallpox, imported nine years ago from Mauritius in a cargo of cast-off uniforms. Mr. Little knows something of medicine, as every missionary should, and he vaccinated hundreds a day with a steel pen for lancet. But the ravages of the disease were dreadful—whole villages were depopulated; the dead were left unburied; the sick were driven out to the forest with a bag of rice and a gourd of water, and, if they ventured back, were stoned off by parents or children.

They say every race that comes in contact with civilisation must run the gauntlet of the old diseases. It was so in Fiji, where two-thirds of the population died of measles brought from Sydney by Cacobau's suite, where that monarch had foolishly



gone to see the world. Sometimes the new disease wholly kills out the unseasoned race. Some Red Indian tribes have gone in this way. Let us hope the Malagasy and the Fijians, thinned out though they have been, may survive.

No one wants the royal burial customs to survive. The late Queen, dying in the midst of the troubles with France, was buried very quietly. Even had there been peace, she would certainly not have been buried like her cousin Rasoherina, the last heathen Queen, in 1868, when the ceremonies were as magnificent in their way as those where-with the Crim Tartar Kings used to be entombed. The coffin was made of twenty-two thousand silver dollars; a chest containing eleven thousand more was placed in the vault, in which were also laid a side-saddle, two chests-of-drawers, several lamps, a papier-maché work-table, a large armchair, and more than two hundred dresses of silk, satin, and velvet, while three thousand bullocks were divided amongst the mourners. This was doing things in a style that will never be repeated. But a royal funeral is still a serious affair. Men and women have to shave their heads, as in Tahiti; and all wear sad-coloured raiment. Funeral rites for common folks are kept up among out-lying heathen tribes.

The *sasy*, or funeral dirge of the Sihanaka, a tribe living north-west of Lake Alaotra, reminds one of the South Sea Island and New Zealand dirges. The dead are "the lost," whom some hard-hearted power has seized as with the grip of a crocodile.

Oh, distressed and sad are the many;  
Oh, scattered are the calves;  
Oh, weed-grown is the plantation;  
Oh, weeping are the children;  
Oh, gone, gone away is the gentle, pleasant one!

I am sorry to say that a deal of *toaka* (rum) drinking has been added to the spearing of oxen, which forms part of the ceremony. The heads of the slain oxen are placed on poles round the house, as the Dyaks place human heads. The widow is dressed up in a bright scarlet *lamba* (mantle), wearing all her beads, and silver chains, and other ornaments. She is placed where everyone can see her, that all may judge how her husband adorned her; and while the rest have gone to the grave, she sits in solitary state. The moment they come back they all fall upon her, tearing her dress, pulling off her ornaments, and crying: "This is the cause of our not having our own." The belief is that her luck,

being stronger than her husband's, has caused his death. Then they fling her a coarse palm-fibre mantle, a broken spoon and dish, and cover her up with a coarse mat, under which she remains all day, not being allowed to speak, whoever may come into the house. She must only move out at night, and must not wash, except her finger-tips. In this uncomfortable state she is kept for a year as strictly as if she were a Red Indian widow. The spirits of the departed are thought to have a good deal of power over the daily life of the survivors. In time of sickness oxen are sacrificed at the forefathers' graves; and you scarcely ever pass a grave among these outlying tribes without seeing the head-stone freshly oiled and wrapped in a new *lamba* (mantle).

A strange place is the Hova capital, with its vast palaces, built with forced labour, its pleasant European houses and its native huts.

One sign of progress is the stone called "the Hovas' weeping-place," set up at the point where the sea comes in sight on the way to the coast. Here the Malagasy slaves on their way to exportation used to halt and lament their lot. This traffic is a thing of the past; and the "Mozambiques," too, have been free since 1877, to the annoyance of Malagasy Tories, who did not at all relish "niggers" being put on a footing of social equality with themselves.

Well, progress is a grand thing; but I prefer Lake Alaotra as it is, with its eighty square miles of water, two thousand seven hundred feet above the sea level, and the tiny towers on the hills round it, and the herds of cattle, and the dug-outs continually carrying their merry freight to and fro, and the crowds of children laughing as they launch their toy-boats, and, above all, the evening stillness when the herons and divers are out so thick that the shore is quite black with them, to the same lake with a railway-station at each end and a steamer plying between them, and birds and native children frightened off. The only drawback to the lake is the crocodiles. One of his bearers told Mr. Little a ghastly story of a fight between one of these and a wild boar. The boar was wallowing when the crocodile made at him. He at once joined battle, and managed to rip up the saurian's stomach; but the crocodile dies hard, and his jaws kept their hold till he had dragged the boar into deep water and drowned him. Herons and divers and natives will probably disappear before the

crocodile does, for he has managed to enlist a small kind of cormorant as sentry. This faithful creature perches on his head or back while he is asleep, and gives a shrill cry the moment danger is at hand. To human creatures the crocodiles (and also the sharks) are dangerous, because the narrow dug-outs (the only means of crossing the rivers) are of such heavy wood that if you get upset your boat sinks and you have to swim for it.

One thing makes travelling pleasant—every foreigner is a guest of the sovereign, and in even the smallest town there is a "Queen's House" in which he is hospitably entertained, the headman looking after his comforts.

I wish I had space to tell about their New Year's customs—the children bringing their mother a present to repay her for having carried them pick-a-back so long; the sovereign, on that day only in strictly native dress, blessing the assembled multitude and sprinkling them with water from a horn of plenty.

The French trouble may, possibly, bring about a reaction towards heathenism, as our New Zealand wars gave rise to Hau Hauism. In 1863, when Radama the Second (shortly afterwards assassinated) gave himself wholly up to French influence, the anti-foreign feeling became anti-Christian, and showed itself in a dancing mania like those in mediæval Europe. Meanwhile the Hovas are very enthusiastic, and talk of introducing the assegai, with which the Zulus did such wonders against British firearms. Let us hope they will be allowed to work out their own civilisation, instead of being taken in hand by European powers. They have plenty of mineral wealth; the bay of Diego Suarez alone contains five of the best harbours in the world; but I, for one, hope their Government will not give way on the question of foreigners owning land, as, till just now, they did on the liquor traffic. Better never "develop their resources"; better go on cutting up dollars for small change, thereby making it needful for every tradesman to carry a pair of money-scales; better even go on with trial by the ordeal of the "poison nut," than let the foreigner come in, and, while drawing to himself all the good of the land, fling to the native the rags and offal of his "culture." That is a civilisation of which the world has seen too many instances. I hope the Malagasy have too much backbone to add one more to the number.

## WHICH OF THEM?

### A STORY IN TEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER IX.

ELEVEN o'clock on Friday morning beheld the court of enquiry constituted in the dining-room of Mr. Marston's house—as it still may be called, seeing that it certainly belonged to some Mr. Marston. It consisted simply of Mr. Picton, who sat at the head of the long table, and thoroughly enjoyed himself in his position of judge, jury, counsel watching the case on behalf of Lucy, clerk of the court, and crier, all rolled into one embodiment of legality. On each side of the table sat one of the rival bridegrooms—Kensington, with an additional shade of gloom on his countenance, and mastering with effort some secret uneasiness, yet self-possessed; Brixton, cross and flurried. After they had taken their seats, there was a minute of awkward silence, while they waited for the arrival of Mr. Wilson. It was broken by the rustling of a dress outside, before the door was opened, and Lucy Marston entered. She was quite calm, though very pale; and she looked strangely older and more dignified than anyone had before seen her, with her white face and heavy-lidded eyes, and rich sweeping dress of black silk. Her hands were quite bare of rings, but in one she held something concealed. The astonished men rose to receive her, and Kensington sprang forward with an eager greeting.

"Lucy, this is a pleasure."

She gave him her hand with a quietness which checked him more effectually than a repulse.

"Wait, cousin," she said; "I want to speak to Mr. Picton."

"I am at your service, Mrs. Marston," answered the lawyer. "Shall I attend you in the drawing room?"

"No, thank you; what I have to say can be said before my cousins. I wish to be present at this enquiry, if you will permit me."

"Certainly, Mrs. Marston; it is your right, if you do not think it will be too trying to your feelings."

"I must control my feelings. I cannot bear to be ignorant of what is going on."

"And I must ask you to promise, as these gentlemen have kindly done, to leave the conduct of this enquiry in my hands, and not to interrupt the witnesses. I know it is a hard thing to ask of a lady, but you can say anything that you please to me."

Lucy did not realise the magnitude of

the sacrifice demanded of her, any more than Mr. Picton believed that any pledge could induce a woman to confine herself to addressing the chair.

"I should not think of interrupting anybody," she answered. "I only want to hear what passes. But I have something to say on my own account first. About my marriage, I have told you all that I can tell, and as you say it is better for me to be silent, I will not say anything more about it just now; but I will not have anybody think for a moment that I am going to sit here as a prize to be awarded to one person or the other. Here is the ring with which I was married; I wore it gladly and proudly when I was sure that it was put on my finger by my Alan. But now everything is dark and confused, and I cannot wear it when I think it may have been put there by someone else. There it is," she went on, laying it on the table before Mr. Picton; "I will never wear it, except as his wife. No one else shall put it on; I will cut off my finger first. I will not say who he is now; but each of my cousins present knows who he is not."

She looked from one to the other steadily, and Mr. Picton watched the effect of her look. Brixton did not meet it, and fidgeted awkwardly, but Kensington had braced himself to encounter her in all moods.

"I do not discuss private matters in public," he said. "When this absurd enquiry is concluded, and this gentleman's pretensions disposed of, you will give me half an hour, Lucy! I have not had an opportunity of speaking to you since Tuesday."

His tone was masterful, and Lucy looked to Mr. Picton for protection.

"If Mrs. Marston takes my advice, sir, she will defer answering that request until the termination of the enquiry you are pleased to call absurd," said Mr. Picton in a tone of displeasure, as he drew forward an easy-chair for Lucy.

She seated herself by the fire, a little aside from the table, and took a screen in a hand that trembled almost too much to hold it. Just then the door-bell rang, and Mr. Wilson was announced. He was a clergyman of a very ordinary type, gentlemanly, not interesting, and in nowise requiring a description of his personality. He bowed, and was bowed to, accepted a chair, and directed his attention to Mr. Picton.

"You have been asked to come here this morning, sir," began the Court, "in order

to state which, if either, of these gentlemen you married to this lady on Tuesday evening, in this house."

"The matter lies entirely between this gentleman and myself," interposed Kensington; "it is only confusing Mr. Wilson's memory to introduce a doubt which does not exist."

"At my very first question," said Mr. Picton severely, "you are breaking your promise not to interfere with the witnesses. Allow me to put my interrogations in my own way. Mr. Wilson, will you kindly reply!"

The clergyman had been looking from one to the other of the cousins, and now responded deliberately:

"The gentleman who called for me on Tuesday evening was a stranger to me; the evening was dark, and the room where the ceremony took place was badly lighted. Respecting his personal appearance, I can only say that he was tall, and wore a moustache. Respecting the controversy between these two gentlemen, I can only say that most decidedly this one"—indicating Brixton—"was not the bridegroom; but that I could not positively swear that the other was, as his voice sounds strange to me. I lay no stress upon this circumstance; I only indicate the precise limits of my evidence." Mr. Wilson shut his lips, and sat still.

"For what we have received——" began Kensington with a harsh laugh. Mr. Picton interrupted him.

"We are much obliged to you, Mr. Wilson. Perhaps this evidence will induce you, sir"—to Brixton—"to withdraw your claim."

"Call Mrs. White," was all Brixton's reply.

Mrs. White was summoned, and appeared in all the pomp of a black silk much more gorgeous than her mistress's, seeing that it shone like Nubian blacking, and accompanied her movements with a sonorous sibilant, as if she had been dressed in Times newspapers. In her hand she carried a New Testament, with a large cross on the cover, and was with much difficulty prevented from kissing it.

"This is not a sworn enquiry, Mrs. White," explained the Court; "it is a private investigation. But I want you to tell the truth as carefully and frankly as if you were upon your oath. You witnessed Miss Scott's marriage on Tuesday evening!"

"Yes, sir; that was the desire of my

late master, and in any case I am sure Miss Scott (as she was then) would have wished for the presence of a responsible married female, though now a widow, which might be supposed by the vulgar to bring ill-luck, but Mrs. Marston, as she is now, was always above such superstitions."

"And who was the bridegroom?"

"Mr. Brixton, to be sure, sir—if he will excuse my using what may appear to be a nickname, but it was generally adopted in the house, without any meaning of disrespect, on account of the difficulty of distinguishing the young gentlemen, all having the same name as their dear uncle, now deceased."

"You saw him?"

"Certainly, sir; although seated at the bedside whilst the service was in progress; for though desirous to support the bride, my assistance was required by her poor uncle, whom I was at that time holding in my arms, but without any failure of attention, as Mr. Wilson is aware that I joined in all the responses, except those proper to the parties interested."

Mrs. White appeared to have come provided with a stock of elaborately-prepared sentences, and a certain allowance of breath to say them with. Mr. Picton, observing that she talked out one chestful at a time, and then came to a full stop, thought that it would save trouble in the end to let her give her evidence in her own way, and not attempt to confine her to the matter in hand.

"You saw the bridegroom distinctly, and can swear that it was Mr. Brixton, as you call him?"

"I can certainly swear it, sir. I have never entertained the slightest doubt on the subject, knowing that my late honoured master always intended to make him his heir, and would turn in his grave—if such a thing were possible—at the idea of his wishes being disputed."

"That has nothing to do with it," broke in Kensington again; "you don't mean to say, Mrs. White, that you really mistook me for this fellow?"

"Mr. Marston—Mr. Marston! I must again remind you of your promise," said Mr. Picton angrily; but Kensington had fairly roused Mrs. White now, and she turned upon him in offended majesty.

"I mean to say, sir, that you were not in the room that evening; no, nor in the house; nor had ever come near your poor uncle for three days. And I mean to say that it was Mr. Brixton as he favoured,

and Mr. Brixton as he chose, and Mr. Brixton as he sent for, and Mr. Brixton as was married to Miss Lucy, long to live happy with her, I hope and pray, and so to rule over us;" and Mrs. White, whose agitation had nearly landed her in the National Anthem, flourished her Testament with a gesture which seemed to instal Brixton on the domestic throne, executed a magnificent curtsy, and retired outside the door. Then she became a prey to poignant regret, thinking that if she had only sat down instead, she might have been allowed to remain and hear the rest of the proceedings.

Mr. Picton and Mr. Wilson exchanged slight smiles; Kensington laughed rather uncomfortably, but Brixton leant back in his chair, and several of the puckers in his face smoothed themselves out. After this the enquiry proceeded with varying results. The man who had nursed Mr. Marston was the next witness, but he would not say anything positive. He had been all taken up with the sick gentleman, and didn't much attend to anything else. Wouldn't swear that he had ever seen either of these gentlemen before, but if he had, thought it was the fair one. Didn't believe that the bridegroom was dark; but nobody told him to notice, and he hadn't noticed. Finally, would not, under any circumstances, swear anything.

Next came the housemaid Jane. She was a strong partisan of Kensington's, and had the evening before enjoyed a walk and a conversation with Horton, which had left her more positive than ever. She would swear through thick and thin, in black and white, that she had peeped in at the bedroom door, and seen Kensington married to Lucy.

Thomas Lees, the footman, followed. He had also been fortified by Horton in the Kensingtonian faith; and he stated with the utmost positiveness that he had opened the door to Mr. Wilson and Kensington and shown them upstairs. Kensington began to look triumphant, and Brixton crestfallen. Mr. Picton felt more uncomfortable than he chose to show; indeed, he chose to show nothing. Lucy grew paler and paler. She felt an evil fate closing in upon her; but she felt in herself a capacity of passive resistance to the bitterest end. There are women who could not pull the trigger of a pistol to save their lives, but who could starve themselves to death rather than yield. Lucy Marston was one of these.

As Thomas retired, with a bow specially

directed to and graciously acknowledged by Kensington, a small head was inserted just above the level of the door-handle, and a rather squeaky voice enquired, "May I come in, gentlemen?" The owner was the page, knife-cleaner, and general-utility-boy of the establishment, lately promoted to buttons, and yclept Bob.

"Come in," said Mr. Picton. "What do you want?"

"Please, sir, I thought you wanted to know about the wedding; and they're all telling lies. So I just came to say so."

"What do you know about the wedding, my boy?"

"Why, sir, Miss Lucy, she sent me that evening with a note to Mr. Yorkshire, to fetch him for to be married."

"How do you know what the note was about?" Mr. Picton enquired.

Bob was not prepared for this question. He reddened, and shifted from one foot to another, but soon recovered himself.

"I was sure of it, please, sir, because I knew they was keeping company before; and then I saw him when he come with the parson in the evening."

"Whom do you mean by 'he'?"

"Mr. Yorkshire, please, sir. And he come punctual at seven, and Thomas let him in, and I was in the hall, and saw them; and now Thomas says it wasn't him at all, and it was, and I know it. And Mrs. White, she says Mr. Brixton, and she boxed my ears for contradicting of her; but if it's that Mr. Yorkshire is to be cheated, I won't have it, not if I was to be sent to a refuge for speaking out."

Bob concluded his manful declaration with very red cheeks and something queer about his eyes. Yorkshire had been kind to the boy when they were at Westlands, and shown the little Londoner various country diversions, inspiring him, altogether, with a loyalty which now shone out brilliantly. Lucy flushed brightly, and longed to kiss the boy, the only one who had spoken for the rights of her absent Alan. Only her promise to Mr. Picton kept her still, while that gentleman proceeded to question the boy. Just then, however, a cab stopped before the door, the hall-bell rang loudly, and steps were soon heard coming up the stairs. A common presentiment struck everyone silent for one long minute; then the door was flung open by Thomas, too sulky to make any announcement, and an elderly clergyman entered, supporting the tall but tremulous figure of

Yorkshire Alan. Lucy sprang to meet him, and was clasped in his arms.

For a moment they forgot the spectators and the whole world; then Yorkshire loosened his arms, and clasped both Lucy's hands, to look into her face. In doing so, he noticed that they were bare.

"Why, Lucy, where is your ring?"

"There," answered Lucy, pointing to the table. "There was a doubt. Kensington said——"

"A doubt! What doubt?" said Yorkshire, picking up the ring, and beginning to gather, from the formal aspect of the party, that something was going on. "Give me your hand, my darling, and let me put this on again before we say another word."

He slipped the ring on her finger and drew her hand inside his arm; then, with the other hand steadying himself on his father's shoulder, he demanded:

"Now let me hear what more villainy is up, and what the doubt is."

"I don't think there is much of it left now," replied Mr. Picton with a smile, glancing at Kensington's empty chair.

That young gentleman had slipped out of the room as soon as Yorkshire came in, caught his cab at the door, and driven off—and out of our story—with all speed.

"I always told you that it couldn't be Kensington," exclaimed Brixton, coming forward to shake hands with the hero of the hour.

"You told us something else, too, I think," observed Mr. Picton. "But, at any rate, it seems at last to be finally decided—Which of Them."

## CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

### BERKSHIRE.

WHILE in Buckinghamshire we had the beech-tree county, in Berkshire we most certainly have the county of the box, a fact noticed by some of the earliest of our annalists. "Which country," writes Asser, the friend and adviser of Alfred the Great, "has its name from the wood of Berroc, where the box-tree grows most abundantly." The wide and windy expanses of the chalk downs favour the growth of this homely shrub, which, under favourable circumstances, assumes the dignity of a forest-tree. If our counties had ever been rearranged in departments after the French fashion, Berkshire would have formed a considerable part of a

department of the upper Thames, for the river, which forms its northern boundary throughout, gives the county its most attractive feature. But in entering Berkshire, we are conscious of a distinct change in scenery and in population, while the dialect of the latter assumes a more bold and Doric character. These are signs that we are entering the limits of the ancient kingdom of the West Saxons—the well-spring of some of the best and most vigorous streams of Saxon blood. The Norman keep gives place in interest to the rude earthworks of the stronghold of the Saxon kings. We are in the country of the Alfreds, the Edwards, and the Athelstans, the story of whose battles, victories, and defeats has still power to move the hearts of those of English blood.

Upon that wide belt of chalk down, which divides the county from east to west, are still scored the entrenchments and ramparts over which were fought the fierce life and death struggles that decided the future of a race. The great Vale of the White Horse, enclosed between the rolling downs and the hills that mark the line of the Thames Valley, was the nursery of the strong, stalwart Englishmen who helped so valiantly in the making of England; and when we read in the newspapers of to-day how the Berkshires held the zereba in the desert against the wild Arab rush, we may recall the days when their ancestors fought with the Danes on Ash-down Hill, and made their Kings and Earls bite the dust. In memory of which last battle was cut the outline of the great white horse, that still is seen upon the hillside.

Nowhere else either shall we find such a thoroughly Saxon abbey as that of Abingdon, which at one time held nearly the whole of the peninsula formed by a great bend of the river Thames round about by Oxford—lands, the gift of Saxon chiefs and kings, and owing little or nothing to the Norman race that succeeded them.

The chronicles of the abbey, indeed, claim a still more ancient origin for the religious house, and tell us of the arrival of an Irish monk, Abbenus—of the school, no doubt, of Columba, and the primitive canobites of Iona—to whom the King of the Britons made a grant of the larger portion of Berkshire. And some of the peaceful anchorites, who wore the black cowl of Columba and his brethren, may have lingered about the spot and transmitted the memory of their spiritual father when

the newly Christianised Saxons began to show their zeal for the Church in the foundation of churches and monasteries. But the actual founders of the abbey were Cissa, a Saxon chief who ruled over Wilts and nearly all Berks, and Hean, his nephew, noted among the gilded youth of the Saxon race for his gallant bearing and splendid equipments. We may take a certain amount of interest in Sir Hean—as our earlier poets would have called him—both because the early chronicles of Abingdon bring him before us as a distinct personality, and again as having given his name to sundry places, pleasant and familiar to those who haunt the great Thames Valley, where Henwood may recall one of his favourite haunts; and Hean's great meadow, pleasantly sloping to the river, where his horses might be seen grazing with many herds of kine, is now known as Henley, the scene of the great water frolic of the year.

Sir Hean was not, however, exactly what he seemed—the blithe sportsman and keen warrior. There was another side to his character. He had his dark hours, when he was troubled about his soul. Once he was attending a mass, celebrated probably by one of the successors of the Irish missionary, when a sermon was preached from the text, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle," etc. The preacher was fervent and impassioned, and his words sank deep into the young man's heart. Especially startled, too, was Sir Hean at the case of the rich young man in the Gospel, who "went away grieved, for he had many possessions." Forthwith, Hean resolved to sell everything he had, and lead a life of humility and poverty.

Sir Hean had a sister, the fair Ceolswitha, whose name was mercifully contracted into Cilla—one may fancy the children have preserved the memory of the pair in nursery-rhyme, and that Hean and Cilla still are in existence as Jack and Jill. This sister was as enthusiastic and far more persevering than the brother, and she forthwith founded a settlement of nuns, who dedicated themselves to the service of St. Helena. The noble church of St. Helena, at Abingdon, occupies the site of this ancient nunnery. But as for Sir Hean, having once vowed himself and his possessions to God, he thought he might take his time in carrying out his contract, and many years elapsed before the broad lands that had been transferred to him for

the foundation of his abbey were duly appropriated. However, before his death, Hean had assumed the cowl, and his new foundation grew and flourished exceedingly, and became the most celebrated school of theology in the kingdom.

More lasting than the school of theology was the fair which the monks established, after great disputes with neighbouring towns—a fair which subsequently crops up here and there in the annals of the county. It was to Abingdon Fair that all the servants of Cumnor Place had gone on that fatal day when Amy Robsart met her death; while a century later, Mr. Samuel Pepys, travelling that way, met a crowd of people, chiefly Oxford scholars, coming home from the fair.

The monkish chronicles of Abingdon, indeed, like most things of the kind, are very much of the "small-beer" order, but here and there are points of interest. As, for instance, a dispute between the monastery and the men of Oxfordshire as to the ownership of a meadow. Ordinary means of identification by metes and bounds were here out of the question, as the river, the great boundary-mark, had changed its course, and the meadow formed a spacious eyot, which might belong, as far as appearances went, to the owner of either bank. Under these circumstances, by a general consent, quite natural in the case of the Oxfordshire men, but rather strangely on the part of the monks, a test was resolved upon of a distinctly pagan, not to say idolatrous character. This was the trial by shield and sheaf, quite innocent in itself, but connected with the traditions of the old Teutonic mythology. A round shield was taken—the round wooden shield, the "war-linden" of the Saxon warrior. It was cup-shaped within, so that it made an excellent impromptu float; and upon the shield was placed a small sheaf of corn, and in the sheaf was stuck a lighted taper, and the whole carefully launched in the centre of the stream. The course of the little craft was breathlessly watched by the spectators who thronged the banks, and at the point where the stream divided the agitation of all concerned was intense. If the floating trophy took the Berkshire side, then the meadow islet belonged to Oxfordshire. The monks set up a hymn; the shield took a turn or two in the eddy, and then careered down the river triumphantly on the Oxfordshire side. The monks of Abingdon had won their meadow.

Now all this was evidently a well-known and generally-respected ordeal, which could hardly have originated in the valley of the Thames, where the river, although it may have changed its channel once or twice in the course of ages, has not been given within historical times to any startling or sudden vagaries. But in the lowlands of the Elbe and the Weser, the former abode, probably, of our Berkshire Saxons, sudden changes in the distribution of land and water might have often occurred, and where a river formed a tribal boundary it would often be important to determine which was the main stream and which was the branch, as well as who should be the lawful possessors of some newly-formed islet. Thus there was a kind of reasonableness about this test of the shield and sheaf, and even the lighted taper had its practical as well as its mystical meaning; since for the taper to remain alight implied a day of exceptional calm, when the influence of the wind upon the floating trophy would be the smallest possible.

Small as are the remains of the famous Saxon abbey, yet they have their own especial charm in the fragments left to peaceful decay among the ordinary occupations of life—in the stream that rushes by to the mill-wheel, and the unbroken calm of the shade of venerable trees—a fragment of broken wall among a cluster of humble but pleasant cottages, and the ancient bridge and the river sparkling by—and the soft beat of the mill that has hardly been silent for all the centuries past. Pleasant, too, is the old town, with the dignity of its monastic gateway, with its quaint, timber-framed houses, and its inns that seem to be expecting the next mail-coach. The old church, too, of St. Helen's, with its wealth of monuments to the rich burghers of the time, when this was a great cloth-weaving place, and with its old-world surroundings of almshouses and church-houses, gives a charming glimpse of a world long passed away.

Abingdon, as a trading town, has experienced various ups and downs. In the first instance it owed its prosperity to the abbey; then when the abbey was destroyed the town became rich as a centre of the cloth manufacture. The cloth manufacture gradually migrated farther to the west, and Abingdon became a coaching town on one of the main lines of road between east and west.

At an earlier period the great highway to the west passed more directly through

the Vale of the White Horse, crossing the river at Wallingford, where a strong entrenchment, and afterwards a noble Norman castle, guarded the ford. The strong earthworks still remain—a monument more enduring than the most skilful masonry—but of the old castle of the King of the Romans, of the Black Prince, and of the widowed princess, fair Joan of Kent, who died within its walls, only a few fragments remain. The castle held out for the King in the Civil Wars, and was severely levelled by the Parliament.

The next strong position on this highway was the Saxon town of Wantage, the birthplace of the great Alfred, which had the privilege of celebrating the thousandth anniversary of its hero's birth in 1849, when the grammar-school was rebuilt in his honour. A fact this almost unique in the world's history—a people looking back for a thousand years of strong, unbroken national life. A thousand years ago, and where were the other great nations of Europe? Hardly yet existing as formless embryos, of which no one could foretell the future developments. But England was even then England, and the men of Berkshire—the long-legged, wiry Berkshire men—were ready then as now to show themselves in the front of the battle when the country's cause is at stake.

There is a general agreement among archæologists that the site of the great battle with the Danes, in which young Alfred, so to speak, won his spurs, is to be looked for at Ashdown Park, a lonely seat among the bleak downs a few miles to the south-west of White Horse Hill. The Danes had formed a stronghold at Reading by entrenching the neck of land between the Thames and the Kennet; and the Saxon King, Ethelred, Alfred's elder brother, had attacked their camp and been repulsed. The English retreated up the Thames towards their own strong fort of Wallingford, and the Danes, finding the way clear for the conquest and plunder of the west, made for the crest of the downs, and followed the ancient ridge-way to Ashdown, where they threw up an entrenchment. The English followed rapidly along the parallel track that followed the windings of the White Horse Vale, gathering the men of Berkshire as they marched. Alfred led the advance, and stormed up the steep, smooth hillside, but again and again he and his men were driven back from the rampart by the serried ranks of its defenders. Alfred looked in vain for

the advance of his brother with the main body of the English forces. As a fit preparation for the fight, mass was being said before the King and his men, and until this was duly finished he would not budge. The event proved the good judgment of the King, for coming up with firm, unbroken ranks, the English cleared the hill, swept it as though with a scythe, in spite of the frenzied courage of their foes. A Danish King and five pirate Jarls were among the slain, and the national life of England was saved for future ages.

With the strong, stubborn nationality that has always distinguished the Berkshire folk, it is not wonderful that here, more than elsewhere, the stories and traditions of an older Teutonic rite should still here and there survive. Among the hills, Weyland Smith has his cave, and at times his hammer may be heard ringing upon the huge stone that forms his anvil. And Weland is, indeed, one of the old heathen gods—the Vulcan of the Saxon mythology. Something, too, may be heard of Weland's more rusé father, Wade, whose memory is preserved in many local names. Wade, who was formerly so celebrated for his boat, that Chaucer refers to the pair in a way that shows he expects his allusion to be generally understood :

And eke these old widowes (God it wote),  
They connen so much craft in Wade's bote.

Concerning Wade and his bote, called "Guingelot," there is nothing to be gathered from the commentators, but perhaps the lore may be preserved, in an altered form, in some secluded west-country village.

When we have crossed the broad, open downs, and descended into the more sheltered valley of the Kennet, we find that the river-track is closely followed both by the railway and the old coach-road to Bath, the direct and shortest road from London, which, starting from the White Horse Cellars, we will say, forms the familiar Kensington High Street and Hammersmith Road, and then, crossing the Thames by Maidenhead Bridge, keeps henceforth to the south of the river altogether, and reaches Bath without any other important water-crossing. This was the track that the Romans followed, but it seems to have been afterwards abandoned for the more devious way by Abingdon, and the reason is not far to seek. For the course of the Kennet is through once formidable bogs and morasses, from which stores of peat have long been extracted; and, when the raised causeways of the Romans had been



ruined by neglect, or destroyed of malice prepense, the road must have been at places quite impassable.

Indeed the first modern instance—using the word modern in a comparative sense—of any important movement upon this line of communication, is during the civil wars, when, as the King held Oxford and Abingdon, and the northern passes of the river, the Parliamentary army marched that way to raise the siege of Gloucester, and so returned, having effected their purpose.

The Lord Essex was in command of the Parliament forces, the son of Elizabeth's favourite, looked upon by the Puritan party as in some way a martyr to their cause, as the rising for which he lost his head was avowedly in their interests. But the present Lord Essex had been the subject of a cause célèbre in his youth, connected with the coarsely scandalous chronicle of his lady's amours with King James's notorious favourite, Carr. And loud was the laughter in the King's camp and ribald were the jokes when it was known that his lordship was in the field, and pressing forward with all his might to secure a safe retreat to London.

It was autumn; the harvest was cleared, and chill gales were beginning to blow. The Parliament forces had suffered severe hardships in crossing the wilds of Wiltshire, and were pushing on for Newbury, where they hoped to find supplies and comfortable quarters. But the King had been beforehand with them, and had occupied the town, and the Parliament men had to content themselves with cold quarters in the fields without.

The King's position was a strong one, and he had only to hold it firmly to ensure the destruction of the enemy, who was cut off from his supplies and greatly outnumbered in cavalry. But all advantages were lost in the headstrong valour of the Royal troops, who assaulted the enemy wildly, and were soon completely out of hand. The slaughter was great on either side, while the King lost many of the bravest of his officers, and among them,

See! Falkland dies, the virtuous and the just.

But Essex had obtained his object, and pursued his retreat, worried by Rupert's cavalry, but not seriously molested.

Another battle was fought in the following year, in which the Earl of Manchester commanded for the Parliament, with Cromwell as a subordinate. Again the result was indecisive, although Cromwell alleged,

and probably with truth, that, if he had been allowed to charge the Royalists, he would have driven them from the field and secured a decisive victory. The honour of the day fell to the train-bands of London—the volunteers of the period—who stood their ground against Rupert and his hot charges with admirable steadiness, and finally drove him from the field.

Long before the civil wars Newbury was noted for its cloth trade and rich clothiers. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries wool was king, and made many a belted knight, and marquis and duke into the bargain. One of the most famous of these clothiers was Jack of Newbury—one John Winscombe—with his hundred looms at work for him—Jack, who at the age of seventy-one joined the Royal army to repel the Scotch, and marched to Flodden with a hundred men, whom he clothed, paid, and led to the fight. As an old ballad sings:

The Cheshyre laddes began the route,  
And the Kendal boys so free,  
But none of them all have fought more stoute  
Than the laddes of Newberrie.

A couple of centuries later Dean Swift, visiting his friend St. John, Lord Bolingbroke, at Bucklebury, originally Burghildbury, writes to Mistress Stella: "His house is in the midst of near three thousand pounds a year he had by his lady, who is descended from Jack of Newbury, of whom books and ballads are written."

Among other curious sights that Newbury owed to its position on the highway from London to Bristol, was, in 1745, the appearance of forty-seven waggons loaded with treasure that had been captured from the French by our English ships, so say the local annals, although it is not easy to account for the French having so much treasure afloat. If it had been the Spaniards now—but it does not appear that we were then at war with Spain. Anyhow, there were the waggons drawn up in Newbury market-place and guarded by soldiers who bivouacked around.

A portion of Newbury bears the name of Speenhamland from some connection with the neighbouring parish of Speen; a place not remarkable, except for its name, which is pretty clearly derived from the small Roman station of Spinae, on the Roman road between Silchester and Gloucester. If we accept this explanation, we are driven to the conclusion that if the name survived from the date of the Roman occupation, there must have been a continuous succession of inhabitants to hand

it down—a small fact, which goes somewhat against the general theory that a complete clearance was made by the Saxons of the ancient inhabitants of the country.

A little farther afield lies Donnington, with its castle that held out stoutly against the Parliament, the ruins of the castle being upon the hill above the modern mansion. An earlier interest, too, is created in Donnington from the tradition that it once belonged to Chaucer the poet, and a tree in the park was long pointed out as Chaucer's oak. Against this it is urged that at the time Chaucer is represented as the owner of Donnington he was pretty certainly living in Westminster, not very well to do, and frequently in need of advances upon his small pension. But quite probably the castle may have belonged to the poet's son, Thomas, who married a rich heiress, and we need not altogether reject the popular account of the matter, but may imagine Dan Chaucer's venerable figure reposing under his favourite tree, escaped from the din of Westminster and the worry of small cares.

All the country about has furnished many relics of the battles of the civil wars, and many local stories have long been current of the various fortunes of King or noble. Shawhouse, which was Charles's headquarters, a fine Elizabethan building raised by a rich clothier, one Sir Thomas Dolman, has, or had, its particular bullet-mark on a panel; the mark of a bullet which but just missed its billet in the King's person. Indeed most of the old houses have curiosities to show in the way of chain-shot, armour, or weapons, while every now and then the spade turns up some relic of mortality, the bones of some gallant soldier who fought for Crown or Parliament.

Farther up the valley of the Kennet—

The Kennet swift for silver eels renowned—

there is only Hungerford with its famous horn, which purports to convey the right of fishing from John of Gaunt to the burgesses of the town; one of those free towns in which the lordship of the manor rests in the constable for the time being. "It is expected," writes a chronicler in the early part of the present century, "that its business will greatly increase when the canal to unite the waters of the Kennet and Avon is completed." But this expectation has not been largely realised. The union of the Kennet and the Avon, although an interesting topographical fact, has not proved commercially of great

moment, and Hungerford may still be classed among towns that have seen better days.

But what shall we say of Reading, about which no remarkable prophecies have been made—Reading that has outgrown its old boundaries and its local history, and become a bustling, prosperous, red-brick town, that leaves a confused impression on the mind of biscuits, flower-seeds, and churches of variegated flint? The old abbey still exists in shapeless fragments among green lawns; but there is little else to remind one of the former history of the town.

Here we strike the Thames again with many pleasant places along its banks, the interest of which is chiefly of a riverside character. And we can here but barely allude to the pride of the county, the Royal Castle of Windsor, with its forests and chaces, about which big books have been written without exhausting the subject. Indeed, Royal Windsor belongs rather to national than to merely local annals.

As a matter of topography, it may be doubted whether the received etymology of Windsor—the Winding Shore—is to be implicitly accepted. For the name originally applied to Old Windsor, near the Bells of Ousely, where the shore is not particularly indented. And, as we have Windlesham at no great distance, it seems more likely that some Saxon Sir Windle was at the bottom of the matter, and gave his name to the shore. Such is the Saxon nature, altogether averse to anything descriptive or romantic in the way of proper names.

## LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNNIE," ETC., ETC.

### CHAPTER XLVII.

ABOUT this time, or possibly a little later, a change, subtle, slow, at first scarcely perceptible to those in daily and constant intercourse with her, seemed to pass over Ellinor. Not a change in bodily health, that to all appearance remained intact, but a change rather of manner, of demeanour. Her stately composure was waning, slowly and surely as the May moon itself was waning over their heads, and in its stead there was beginning to show a feverishness of manner, an almost defiant gaiety, which told of strong nervous excitement going on within, and but barely held in check.

Uncle Hugh and Lucy noticed the

change only by comparing the Ellinor of to-day with the Ellinor of six months back. They held their peace over it, however, though it cost the latter one or two more of those heavy showers of tears for which she appeared to have such an endless capacity.

People in society noticed it, and said to each other how much Miss Yorke had improved in manner since she had fallen in love, and what a delightful house hers would be to visit in by-and-by, when the young people had married and pitched their tent.

Phil noticed it also, caught the contagion of it, exaggerated her gaiety in his own moods, and stimulated her longing for excitement by perpetually feeding its cravings. It is so easy in the height of the season to keep the ball of gaiety always rolling. A popular and not ill-looking young man who makes it generally known that he wishes on every possible occasion to be asked to meet a distinguished and beautiful young woman is scarcely likely to be disappointed in his desires.

Balls, plays, receptions, operas, races, dinners, each succeeded the other for this pair of lovers with their usual hurry. Talk about the ceaseless, idle waltzing of flies in a summer's air! Surely there never yet crawled a family of flies out of their eggs, who, in their longest span of existence, contrived to get through so vast an amount of idle hard work as did these votaries of Fashion at the goddess's headquarters in London.

There was another noticeable trait in Ellinor's character which showed itself about this time—namely, a readiness to take offence at trifles, to be annoyed and to exhibit annoyance at matters upon which at one time she would have scorned to bestow a second thought. For instance, last season, any number of stormy interviews with a dead lover's mother, and threatenings of an overtaking vengeance, would not have cost her one sleepless night; now, forsooth, because she hears and knows that Mrs. Thorne is perpetually to be seen driving round and round Grosvenor Square, and looking up at her windows, she must needs order a bottle of chloral to be bought, and desire Gretchen to put a dose ready to her hand every night.

It was assuredly an odd thing for Mrs. Thorne to do. But, so people said, Mrs. Thorne was doing many odd things just then, and, indeed, was beginning to be talked about not a little by her few remaining intimate friends. She saw no one; she went nowhere; she lived entirely at

Rodney's old rooms in Jermyn Street, and by this time, so people reasoned, those rooms must simply have become buried under dust, for no living soul save Mrs. Thorne ever gained admission to them. The blinds were kept perpetually drawn, and never so much as a crack of the window was opened to let in a breath of sweet air.

In a room below stairs, Mrs. Thorne daily received her maid, who had strict orders to attend to the freshness and deepness of her mistress's crape—nothing more. At a neighbouring hotel Mrs. Thorne took one meal a day, and if she ever took another no one could tell when, where, or how it was had. At three o'clock precisely her carriage was brought round, and for the two subsequent hours the lady in her deep mourning might have been seen driving round and round Grosvenor Square at a slow, all but funereal pace.

The old coachman, who had driven her for nearly twenty years, shook his head mournfully, with something like a tear in his eye, and even the new footman, who had only been engaged that season to attend her drives, looked grave and expressed his opinion that "things weren't as they ought to be, and it was time some of the lady's friends interfered."

But as no one pays much heed to what coachmen and footmen are pleased to remark, and as the very few intimate friends Mrs. Thorne chanced to have left did not care to put themselves prominently forward in the matter, the lady's manner of life was in no sort interfered with; her gloomy seclusion in Rodney's rooms was not broken in upon, and her equally gloomy two hours' drives continued with undeviating regularity.

Sometimes just as Ellinor was alighting from her afternoon's drive, Mrs. Thorne's dreary equipage would be slowly creeping along past the house. The white, hard face, the fierce, and of late the wild glitter in the lady's eye, never failed to set Miss Yorke shuddering and ill at ease. At one time she and Mrs. Thorne had been wont to exchange a slight bow of recognition, but this had come to an end now, since on one occasion Mrs. Thorne had looked Ellinor full in the face and passed on without so much as a smile.

"What does it mean—what can it mean? If she has anything to say to me, why does she not stop and say it?" Ellinor more than once demanded irritably of Lucy, with a look, at times, on her face which, of course, was utterly unintelligible to the latter.

Lucy's heart seemed aching in every fibre just then—not for herself, however, and her own desolated girlhood. Her aptitude for sympathy with the sorrows of others had incidentally wrought her this benefit—that she had no time left for weeping over her own griefs. Mrs. Thorne and Ellinor halved her heart between them. She would have liked—had she been free so to do—to have gone to the elder lady and implored permission to wait on her, to tend her, if not as a daughter, as any maid-servant might who hoped, in course of time, to render herself and her services indispensable to her mistress.

Her love and gratitude to Ellinor alone prevented her doing this. "Till death us do part" was the vow she had registered in her own heart when she had given herself up unreservedly to Ellinor's friendship and companionship, and it never for one moment occurred to her that aught but death could sever this love and friendship.

Yet none the less her heart ached with its load of unspoken sympathy for Rodney's mother; every spare five minutes found her watching from an upper window the dark, slow carriage, with its silent, gloomy occupant. Not a chance expression of Mrs. Thorne's eye or mouth, when she happened to be near enough to see either, escaped her. The forlornness, the fierceness, and, as time went on, alas! the distraught and wandering expressions that went sweeping over the aged white face, seemed to photograph themselves on her brain, destroying her peace by day, breaking in upon her rest at night.

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

EDIE did not work one half so hard at the society treadmill as did Phil and Ellinor. For one thing her circle of friends was microscopic compared with theirs, and with no amount of energy could she have secured for herself one tithe of the invitations which daily swelled Ellinor's card-rack, or decorated Phil's mantelpiece. For another the whole grind of the season that year was a pain and a weariness to her; the flavour and sweetness had somehow gone out of everything she was called upon to taste and enjoy. Fight against the fact lustily as she might, it was making itself felt at last that Phil had been the sun in her heavens; the sun had set, naught remained for her but chilliness, dampness, and night-shadows now. Yet she obstinately refused to return to Stanham, or even take a little trip to Switzerland which the Squire

ventured to suggest one day when he thought his little daughter looking more than usually white and forlorn.

Edie put the idea on one side loftily enough.

"I can't think how it is, papa, that you never will let anyone be at rest," she said in an utterly surprised tone; "we no sooner get into one place and comfortably settle down, than you immediately think we should be better off somewhere else, doing something or other we detest doing. I declare you are never happy unless you are taking railway-tickets or writing luggage-labels. Now if I led you the life that you lead me you might complain!"

"Oh—h!" groaned the squire, but Edie went on remorselessly: "One thing I do know, and that is, that I am not going to stir out of London till I've seen all the horse-shows and the dog-shows, and have been to all the charity bazaars that are going to be held, and have looked at all the pictures in the Academy at least a hundred and fifty times, and have heard the Duke play the violin, and Patti and Nilsson sing—oh, say at least twenty times—and have been to Sandown, and Lord's, and Goodwood."

"And—and," laughed the Squire, "Heaven only knows where besides! Well, I suppose, Edie, all this put into plain English means, 'Here I am, and here I'll stay till I'm thoroughly worn-out with sight-seeing, and have to go back to Stanham to be physicked!'"

Edie, however, had she been so minded, could have translated her wishes into equally plain and far more pathetic English somehow in this fashion:

"Here I am, and here I'll stay till I've seen Phil and Ellinor together, and found out for myself whether he really loves her, or whether he is only befooled and bedazzled by her beauty, like the rest of the men."

Only second to this wish Edie cherished another, that was to see and speak with Lucy Selwyn. Since she had been in London, Edie had heard a good deal of Miss Selwyn—how that she was Ellinor's sole confidante and companion; in fact, her echo, her shadow, nothing more so far as wishes and ideas went.

Edie had not the slightest doubt left in her mind as to the identity of Lucy Selwyn with the writer of the mischievous letter which had shipwrecked her life's happiness. She longed to look Lucy straight in the face, and find out of what stuff she was made; whether her mischief had been

done mischievously, or in honesty and with a good heart.

Once, walking in Kensington Gardens with her father, they had come upon Ellinor and Lucy turning off from the broad walk. Lucy had her crape veil down, so of course her features were only suggested to Edie's mind. The Squire half paused; he would have enjoyed a walk and talk with Ellinor in and out among the shadows and sunshine that shifted and played hide-and-seek among the full-leaved trees. Not so Edie. Ellinor, side by side with Phil, she meant to face, to criticise, to pardon, or to condemn, but Ellinor without Phil she did not intend to endure for even thirty seconds. She walked on briskly ahead, and her father was compelled to follow.

"I do think, Edie," he said a little complainingly, "you might have stayed a minute and had a chat with your cousin. I've not spoken a word to her since we've been in London. You know you made me promise not to call on her——"

"Papa," interrupted Edie with a veritable crescendo of emphasis, "I dislike spiders; I hate cats, adders, and snakes; and I abominate Ellinor Yorke."

The Squire said no more.

#### CHAPTER XLIX.

THOUGH Edie could not get a good view of Lucy's face, Lucy had the plainest, clearest sight of hers that eyes could well have. Not even the flimsiest of spotted nets guarded Edie's complexion, and the bold spring sunshine threw, unrebuked, its garish light upon the childlike features.

Lucy looked her longest and hardest at her, and then felt a sudden twinge at her heart, so sharp as to be almost physical. This the little girl who had played fast and loose with Phil Wickham! Could it be possible that eyes and mouth skilled in the game of "fast and loose" could wear that frank, honest, yet, withal, sorrowful expression?

For the first time since she had written her ill-judged letter, she began to have qualms of conscience on the matter.

Done for the best, of course, it had been, but was it for the best, after all? That was the question that began to torment her now.

Colonel Wickham, calling about this time on Miss Yorke, increased, though unintentionally, Lucy's disquietude. The Colonel had put off his visit of ceremony so long as it was possible to do so, still almost refusing to credit his senses as to

the reality of Phil's lovemaking. When, however, every other person he met took to congratulating him on Phil's success in winning the beauty of the season, he felt the call could no longer in decency be deferred. He made it, however, as brief as possible, expressing his pleasure at the prospect of Miss Yorke entering his family in polite but somewhat formal fashion.

Ellinor received his congratulations smilingly, condescendingly—Lucy could only wonder over her marvellous self-control—and then passed on to generalities.

"Have you seen my little country cousin—little Edie Fairfax, I mean?" she asked, laying a wonderful emphasis on the adjectives "little" and "country."

"I think," said Colonel Wickham, rather stiffly, "you might find a more suitable sobriquet for Miss Fairfax, if you must have one at all."

"What would you suggest?" asked Ellinor graciously. "Little Edie always does and always will remind me of daisies and buttercups, and cowslips and bluebells, before anything else."

"You are right, Miss Yorke," answered the Colonel, rising to take his leave. "Edie does and ought to remind one of all that is sweet, pure, lovely, and straight from God's hands. The sobriquet is not so inapt as at first sight it seemed."

The world as yet knew nothing of Edie's engagement to Colonel Wickham. So far as anyone could see, her manner to the Colonel had not undergone the slightest alteration. She petted and scolded him alternately, just as she did her own father; rode with him, walked with him, talked with him in turn with her father, till at length the Squire began to think the whole thing must be a sort of dream which one or other of them had dreamt and told the rest as a fact. He treated the matter in cavalier fashion accordingly.

"She'll no more marry you, Wickham, than she'll marry Winterdowne, and she can't marry him, for I hear he has just started on a voyage round the world," he said, as he sat chatting with his old friend over their coffee and cigars. "The only one the little puss has ever cared about is Master Phil, and if she'd only bring down her pride a peg, and send Phil a line, it's my belief he'd be mighty glad to be billing and cooing with her as hard as ever. Don't talk to me about Phil and Ellinor being engaged to be married. It's rubbish, every word of it! I know Phil if you don't—though it strikes me you

ought—and he's no more in love with *Ellinor* than she is with him. Why, man, nothing less than a Duke and a hundred thousand a year would satisfy her ambition. Don't tell me! It's just Miss *Eddie's* fits and whims that have set us all going, and if she'd only beckon with her little finger to him, he'd be back at her feet like a bird."

And to this cheery view of things the Squire stuck hard and fast, obstinately ignoring—as had been his wont through life—even the evidence of his senses when they told against his optimistic theories, and resisting like a stone wall all efforts of unbiassed outsiders to overturn them.

Even including little *Eddie's* battering-ram, applied that self-same evening, for, coming in to say good-night, she chanced to overhear her father's final words.

"Beckon to him—to Phil!" she cried, opening her eyes very wide. "Is it likely I should do such a thing when I have written and told him I don't care two-pence halfpenny for him! Papa, when will you believe that Phil and I never were and never will be in love with each other! Oh dear! I am getting so tired of saying the same thing over and over again!"

"Take care, *Eddie*! you'll choke with our *Burmahs*," said the Squire, giving a loud, long cough, as though the smoke were going down his own throat.

"Ochoke! As though my lungs were half gone!" said *Eddie* scornfully. "Papa, do let me make you understand once and for ever that Phil and I never were anything but friends, and never mean to be anything else to the end of our lives."

The Squire found he wanted another cigar, recollected he had left his cigar-case in his great-coat pocket, and forthwith vanished.

*Eddie* dropped her petulance, and turned piteously to Colonel Wickham.

"It is really of no use my talking to papa," she said. "I might as well let it alone. I feel sure if he meets Phil he will say or do something ridiculous. I have just had an invitation from *Ellinor* to her ball next month, but I dare not ask papa to take me. I'm confident he'd say or do something that would drive me half-wild. Phil will be there, of course?" This added as a question a little wistfully.

Colonel Wickham was all attention in a moment. He threw away his cigar, and went over to *Eddie's* side.

"Do you really wish to go to this ball, *Eddie*? Have you set your heart on it?" he asked, looking down earnestly into the girl's face; and his thought as he said this

was: "Does she really wish to get face to face with Phil once more, to see him the betrothed lover of another woman, and find out for herself whether her own love for him is living or dead?"

*Eddie* seemed to understand his unspoken just as easily as his spoken thoughts, and knew very well how to get out of questions she had no mind to answer.

She laughed merrily enough.

"How can you ask such a thing when you know that ever since we've been in London papa has been sending home for me a succession of the most wonderful ball-dresses that ever were seen! There's a thing in grey—you shall see it—exactly like a tombstone, with black lines running along it; and another—supposed to be old English and very Queen Annish—uncommonly like the roof of a house, with flaps, and trap-doors, and tiles, and chimney-pots."

*Eddie* paused for breath. They were standing opposite a long mirror, with lights either side of it. Into this somehow Colonel Wickham's eyes wandered dreamily, and saw a sight which sent the dreams helter-skelter out of them, and made him bite his lip and mutter to himself:

"You fool! Don't you see it there facing you? January and June! Pull yourself together, and get all such nonsense out of your head."

Certainly the picture which that mirror threw back was rather that of a father and daughter than of a pair of eager, passionate lovers. Yet it is possible that a third person, peeping over the shoulders of these two, might have decided that June might do far worse than pair with such a January. True, there was no fire of love, no passion of longing, in that more than middle-aged, careworn face, but was there not a something which might very well serve as a substitute for both—a dignity, a strength, a patience, and a pitifulness which rarely, if ever, comes hand-in-hand with the fire and the passion!

The Colonel roused himself with an effort.

"We were talking of balls, *Eddie*, not of tiles and chimney-pots. I don't quite see the connection," he said.

"I don't think I do either," answered *Eddie*. "I've forgotten what I was saying. It doesn't in the least matter; I'm bound to talk a lot of nonsense every day I live. I often wonder people ever listen to me."

"If I had said that——"

"I wish you would say it sometimes! Colonel Wickham," and here came a sudden change in *Eddie's* tone, "do you know I

have been thinking so much lately how ridiculous it was of me to say to you as I did a little while ago, 'Let's pretend to be engaged!' I'm sure I don't know why I said it."

Eddie spoke impulsively, simply on the spur of the moment. When she had first come into that room she had not had the slightest intention of speaking in this brutally frank, girlish fashion.

He frowned heavily, did not look down at her small, upturned face, but kept his eyes steadily fixed on the glass opposite.

"Did you say 'let's pretend,' Eddie?" he asked. "I have no recollection of your using those words."

"No, I don't think I did; but, of course, that was what I meant. It was nothing but pretence, was it, from beginning to end? But I thought it would stop people talking, and—and convince papa that I really had given up Phil, and——"

"Eddie, supposing it was not pretence on my part—nothing but right-down, sober earnest—what then?" he asked, suddenly withdrawing his eyes from the mirror, and fixing them full upon Eddie.

The words had somehow been startled out of him. It was hard for him to be as it were always skirting the edge of his happiness, and never to make an effort to snatch it.

But the next minute he could have anathematised himself for uttering them, such a look of genuine, commingled terror and surprise went fleeting over Eddie's face.

"Oh, you don't mean it—you can't mean it!" she cried. "It would be awful—it would be terrible—it would be monstrous, unheard of——"

"Ridiculous, idiotic—in fact, everything most unlike you and me that could be imagined. Quite right—so it would be, child; I only said it to scare you."

And once more, to the Colonel's fancy, the mirror-picture seemed to say, "You fool, look in here and learn wisdom! January and June indeed!"

But Eddie scarcely seemed as reassured as he could wish. She looked white and frightened still, and when she spoke it was in timid, apologetic fashion, and not with her former cruel frankness.

"It never occurred to me for one moment that anyone could mistake what I meant," she said hesitatingly. "I know it was very like flirting—wicked flirting—but I didn't mean it for that. If I thought—if I thought that I had given pain to anybody, the least pain, I would never—never——"

And then she sat down on a chair and burst into tears, covering her face with her hands.

Of course he did his best to comfort her, apologising humbly for his thoughtlessness, his wooden-headedness, not to know that jokes were the last things in the world people would give him credit for. And then he drew her hands from her face, and dried her eyes, and brought her a glass of wine, and made her drink it.

"The truth of it is, Eddie," he said, when he saw she was a little calmer, and able to listen to him, "I must get back to my figures as quickly as possible; they suit me better than anything else in life—keep my brain steady, my mind occupied. Did I tell you about the rotatory table I am having made—a superb thing it'll be when it's finished—will beat all the assurance companies' machines hollow;" and so on, till she looked up at him once more and smiled.

Then he began to talk about the ball again.

"If you really want to go, Eddie, there's no reason why you shouldn't. For my part, I do not see any reason why you should wish to go; but, however, that is for you to decide. I'll take you, if you like" (your father will be only too glad to cry off it), "and look after you, and see you don't tire yourself. Now say 'Good-night,' child. Here comes the Squire."

Eddie threw a great deal of gratitude into the "good-night look" she gave the Colonel, when she vanished through one door as her father came in at the other.

She was also a long time saying her prayers that night, and when she got up from her knees she found herself asking herself a question to which for the nonce she could find no answer.

It had a good many "ifs" in it, and ran somewhat in this fashion:

If she found that Phil really did love Ellinor, and if Ellinor really loved him, and if they meant to marry, and if she—little Eddie—found that, after all, she could go home and think no more of Phil, why, then, shouldn't she try to forget all about herself, and her own happiness, and do her best to make someone happy, who had deserved, but somehow had missed, his happiness in life?

NOW READY,  
THE  
**SPRING AND EASTER EXTRA NUMBER**  
OF  
**ALL THE YEAR ROUND,**  
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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal  
CONDUCTED BY  
**CHARLES DICKENS**

No. 858. NEW SERIES.      SATURDAY, MAY 9, 1885.      PRICE TWOPENCE

## ONLY A BUSINESS MAN.

By MAY DRYDEN.

### CHAPTER I.

A GIRL of about eighteen years of age was sitting by the window of a small room. She was sewing, but every now and then her hands dropped idly on her lap, and she gazed dreamily into the dreary street. Her black, crape-trimmed dress seemed to denote the recent loss of some friend or relative; her face wore a tired, anxious expression. Presently, however, it lit up with a smile; she rose quickly, and, letting her work lie where it fell, ran downstairs to hold the house-door open for a young man who was coming along the road. If she had looked tired, he looked doubly so, appearing, indeed, hardly able to drag one foot after the other, and carrying his head bent down. He was slightly built and very thin, and his careworn countenance contrasted strangely with his evident youthfulness. He and the girl were unmistakably brother and sister; both had keen, restless grey eyes, with the same possibilities of great love and tenderness expressed in them; both had light hair, in the brother thin and spare, leaving his temples and heavy brows much exposed; in the sister bright and abundant, full of pretty wayward kinks and curls. In both the mouth was mobile and sensitive, showing every change of feeling, and suggesting a certain incongruity between it and a somewhat heavy under-jaw and a square chin.

These were Clarence and Gordon Fenchurch, the two youngest children of Philip Fenchurch, lately deceased, who had been the senior partner of the firm of Fenchurch Brothers, cotton manufacturers, of Homcester.

"Don't speak to me, Clarence," was all Gordon said, as he came up the steps and his sister held out a welcoming hand to him.

Apparently she was used to his mood; she obeyed him literally, contenting herself with moving about him for a while, and plying him with all manner of little womanly tenderesses. He stood much in need of her good offices. Lying back in an easy-chair, he remained perfectly quiescent while she waited on him. Between her ministrations she laid the cloth for tea, stepping from cupboard to table with noiseless tread, and handling cups and saucers with deft fingers that made no slightest rattle.

When Gordon came home, worn out as he was to-night, Clarence allowed no one but herself to enter the room in which he was. Presently a servant brought up boiling water. Clarence took it at the door, and brewed the tea, then turned again to her brother.

"Now, Gordon," said she, "tea is ready."

He left the room at once, and shortly returned, having arranged his hair and dress with a scrupulous nicety not often found in a Homcester man, a being rather given to despising the small particularities which go to make the exterior of a gentleman, and apt to consider that clean nails and a well-brushed coat belong to a polish which is a necessary concomitant of metropolitan falseness.

Gordon Fenchurch, however, was particular almost to conceit about his personal appearance.

Clarence gave him his tea, and waited until he had taken it before she spoke to him again. She was one of those rare women who know when to be silent. As he began to look somewhat refreshed, and



to lose a little of his weariness, she asked :  
 "Well, Gordon, what news?"

"Bad news, Clare, for me," he answered despondently. "But what does it matter? When did things ever turn out anything but badly for me?"

"Hush, Gordon! how can you tell? It may not really be so dreadful after all. What is this news which is so bad for us?"

"I said for me; you are all right, Clare."

"What nonsense! As though news could be bad for you and not for me. Do tell me what it is!"

"We have been arranging my father's papers all day long. They are in the greatest confusion; but we have found his will."

"Well, what then? You were looking for it, were you not?"

"Jamison drew up the will, so we sent for him, and read it. Clarence, I am not even mentioned in it."

"Not mentioned! But, Gordon, how can that be? I do not understand. My father had no reason for leaving you out. You never displeased him!"

"I do not understand either. I cannot explain. The will was made years and years ago, when I was a mere baby. You know what a curious mixture of carelessness in private affairs and accuracy in business, father was. He must have just forgotten all about me, and I dare say Jamison did not know of my existence. At any rate, everything is left to Everett, and Mark, and Staniland, excepting a thousand pounds each to Eleanor and you."

"But, Gordon, of course the older ones will make it all right. I suppose they will keep on the business?"

"Yes, they are all partners now, you know."

"Then, no doubt, they will give you a share too. Have you asked them?"

"Asked them! Do you really imagine for a moment that I would stoop to beg of my brothers?"

"Gordon, do not be too proud. Do not offend them."

Gordon paid no attention to her words. He had risen, and was pacing with angry, rapid strides up and down the room.

"That is the worst of it," he said. "I don't mind about being rich—you know I do not. But you know, too, how my father loved his business, and what he has made of it. And he trusted me to carry it on. He had no idea he was going to die for

many a long year yet, or I am sure he would have secured me a share in it. We talked of it a hundred times, and I saw such wonderful capabilities in it. I understood it, I think, even better than he understood it himself. It will nearly break my heart to see it all go to rack and ruin. But, Clare, it is not for the sake of the money; you believe that, do you not?"

"Of course I do; but why do you keep harping on that so, Gordon. I have never thought you too fond of money."

"Everett was accusing me just now of being too fond of it. He said I cared for nothing else. He said I had neglected my education, and my family ties, and everything else that was good, just to get a hold upon business life. Rather a sharp accusation that, to bring against a young fellow of twenty, was it not?"

Gordon laughed, but there was no merriment in his laugh.

"It was too bad," said Clarence warmly; "and quite false. What could make Everett say such a thing?"

"Well, in the course of our work to-day, it came out that I am the only one of them who really knows anything about the business. I was surprised myself to find out how little they all understand about the mills and everything connected with them, when they've been drawing their income from them for years. If you will believe me, Everett was actually not aware how many hands we employed in the Darley Brow Mill, and did not know the name of either of our overlookers, nor how much we gave them a week. He was downright indignant, too, because we employ half-timers—says we are robbing the poor children of half of their education. I had to keep setting them all right on one point after another, and of course they did not like it. But how could I help it? I tell you what, Clare, they will never be able to disentangle the confusion affairs have dropped into without me. They are no more fit for it than you are—no, nor half so fit."

"Why should they carry it on without you? I should think they would be only too glad to give you a share—the share that should by rights have been yours."

"What share? Nothing is legally mine, and my brothers offer me——"

"Well?"

"A clerkship at five-and-twenty shillings a week, with the promise of a rise if things go on successfully. If, indeed! There is not the slightest chance that they will

Then they say, if I can raise a certain sum of money, they will give me a small share in the business."

"Mean!" cried Clara.

"Wait a minute; there is more behind. Things are all at sixes and sevens already. There has been some frightful muddling somewhere. With the business in a splendidly flourishing condition, there is apparently not a penny of ready money to be had."

"But my father lived so simply of late. We must have known it if he had spent any large sum of money. There must surely be some mistake."

"No; Everett and Stan and Mark have all been drawing absurdly large incomes. That, no doubt, was why father retrenched so. I suspect the worry of it killed him at last. You know what he was. He'd have gone without his dinner any time that Everett might dine twice, and that was pretty much what it came to. Well, Everett must draw in now."

"Poor Everett!" said Clarence thoughtfully.

Poor Everett indeed! He was the eldest of Mr. Fenchurch's large family. There were nearly twenty years between Clarence and him. She had always been very, very fond of this brother of hers. Some women are born willing slaves to father or brothers, or both. Content if permitted to adore the men with whom they are thrown, and absurdly grateful for the smallest recognition of their devotion, they are often unwilling to transfer their allegiance, even to a husband. Clarence was one of these. As a child she had revered Everett almost as she had revered her father. She had some excuse for her infatuation, for infatuation it was, as she painfully discovered with riper years. Everett's personal appearance was such as to inspire respect. He was tall and strong; indeed, of commanding aspect, and very handsome. "A perfect gentleman," casual acquaintances called him, and compared him to Colonel Newcome. Grave and generally self-contained, he nevertheless knew when to relax so as to give gratification to those about him. Courteous to everyone, his manners were winning and gracious in the extreme to those younger than himself, always leaving an impression on their minds that it was good indeed in such a man to condescend to talk to them. He was well-educated, had never ceased to cultivate his mind, and could set folks right on any subject they presumed to talk about.

But then he always set them right so kindly, with such an air of apology for seeming to know better than they did, that their feelings were never hurt. His own memory was tenacious, as was Gordon's also. Gordon, however, turned his to account almost solely for business, burdened it with the prices of thousands of pieces, the patterns and cost of making the same, and such like details of his trade. Everett acquired some knowledge in nearly every branch of learning; was a good linguist, knew something of science, could hold forth at will on almost any question, political or social. He was a bibliomaniac too; in fact, had no tastes which were not thoroughly refined. His own room in his exquisite house was full of rare and precious books, elegant bits of statuary and quaint antiques. He would show his treasures with a deprecating smile and say:

"It is foolish, I know, to set such store by perishable things, but really, I cannot resist a rare book or gem when I see it."

To all this he added a highly religious temperament. He, like his brothers and sisters, had been brought up in the Church of England, and in the strictest Evangelical school of that Church. He had taken to religion very kindly. He liked to observe ordinances and ceremonies. He was a strict sabbatarian. Very different had been the effect of their bringing up on Gordon and Clarence. Possibly Everett himself had done much to disgust them with these outside shows of religion, which seem to mean so much and are in reality so hollow; for, after all, the strongest characteristics of this wonderful man were gross selfishness and contemptible weakness of mind in the practical affairs of life.

#### CHAPTER II.

"GORDON," said Clarence, after a pause, "what shall you do?"

"Why do you ask what I shall do? It is no business of mine."

"Oh, well," said Clarence, with easy assurance, "of course I know you'll have to put things straight now, whatever happens afterwards."

"I don't know. Everett is an idiot about business really, and Mark and Stan-land are just wild with him. No wonder! Do you know, if Stan were to die to-morrow, there would not be money to put his little lads to school? And that with one of the best businesses in Homcester. It is maddening!"

"And is it Everett's fault?"

"Largely; the others are to blame, too, though. They ought all to have known better what they were about, and not have spent money so recklessly. And instead of doing anything, they just waste their time wrangling like three old women, as to whose fault it is. And to think that the fools are planning to shut me out from any share in the guidance of affairs!"

"Gordon, if you could buy your share now, at once, would they let you?"

"What is the good of asking that? How could I do it?"

"There is my thousand pounds, I suppose; is that safe?"

Clarence spoke hesitatingly and thoughtfully.

"Safe enough! But how can you imagine I would touch that? You must have as low an opinion of me as Everett has."

"You think too much of Everett's opinion, and of everyone else's, Gordon; but that does not matter now. Why should you not take my money? You do not imagine the firm will fail, do you?"

"No, not if I can get a voice in the management of affairs; otherwise, yes."

"Well, then, in case my money gave you that voice, it would be safely invested. It must be invested somewhere, and why should not you have the use of it, as well as anyone else? Indeed, it seems to me to be the simplest way out of the difficulty for everybody concerned. Gordon dear, do take it."

She had risen, and was standing with one arm around her brother; he stooped and kissed her.

"My darling," said he, "I will take it. I really believe it will be quite safe. I had not thought of it before. It will not be much, but with that, and showing them that they cannot do without me, I will make them let me in. I shall ask for only a small share, but only let me get my foothold—only give me a start, and then——"

"Then, Gordon?"

"Then, Clarence, I will show you what that business may be made. If I live to be forty years old, it shall be the largest thing of its kind in the neighbourhood. We will be rich, Clare, and powerful because we are rich. We will employ hundreds of men. Crowds shall be dependent upon us."

The young man's eye glowed as he spoke. What was all this ardour for? For business? Yes. Was there then

truth in his brother's accusation? Did Gordon Fenchurch neglect everything that he might become a good business man? Yes, there was a first truth in that accusation, but a nobler and wider truth lay behind. Everett saw in business nothing that was not sordid, mean, and poor. Out of the fulness of his heart his mouth spoke. Had he been an ardent business-man, sordidness, meanness, poverty of heart, and mind, and soul, were the qualities which he would have developed, and he could not conceive that, with any man, it could be otherwise.

But Gordon saw by a purer light. He saw the great possibilities for good which lay in a successful commercial career. He thought of and longed for the immense power and influence that might and should belong to a man on whom hundreds were dependent for their daily bread. Each of the brothers, in reality, took out of the commercial life just what he put into it. It must always be so. There was yet another motive impelling Gordon to grasp at a business life. That was the power he felt within himself to achieve success in it. What is the motive that impels an artist to paint his never-dying picture—a poet to sing his ever-echoing songs, save just that same consciousness of innate power?

Am I appearing to apologise for my hero? Nothing is further from my intention. He needs no apology. His life was as he ever meant it should be—upright, good, and true.

Clarence looked at her brother, as he spoke, with a loving admiration and a comprehension of his desires and aims such as he might never hope to meet with elsewhere. But, nevertheless, Everett's saying of the afternoon rang in her ears and forced her to utter a warning:

"Gordon dear, take care. What afterwards? What behind?"

"Afterwards! Who can tell? Behind! Always you and I, sister mine, and, in us, two lives lived as fully as possible. But there is no danger, I know. Listen, Clare. I know I shall succeed. I will succeed. Be it yours to see that I am not lost in my success."

"I accept the charge, Gordon; be it mine."

They were full, this young brother and sister, of loving faith in each other. Clarence never doubted Gordon's power to accomplish his end in life. Gordon thought that he could not go wrong while always, at

home, was this gentle, loving sister waiting to encourage, help, and ennoble him. Was it not a pure, good compact that they made, though it only referred to business? Was not Gordon Fenchurch as truly a young hero, equipping himself in a noble and brave spirit for the battle of life, as any who sought for a high place in the ranks of art, or literature, or science? His was the desire to be a man among men, to use to the utmost his God-given powers; God-given as truly as any powers which men value highly, and as truly fit to be used for the service of God and man.

Both brother and sister were silent for a time. Then Clarence, ever thoughtful of Gordon's health, spoke.

"We must go to bed now, dear. I wish I could ensure your going to sleep."

"How can I sleep with things as they are now? How rest with the prospect of our interview with Everett to-morrow? I do not think I have slept six hours in the past six nights. But my restlessness is no reason why you should sit up, my dear little sister. So go to bed and to sleep."

Clarence would have stayed with her brother, but Gordon generally got his own way when he had made up his mind that he would have it, and she retired.

The young man plunged immediately into a mass of intricate accounts, which must be straightened out and put in order by someone. Mark and Staniland would never have dreamt of sitting up at night to work; they and their unworldly brother Everett were resting peacefully. Yet these accounts must be ready to-morrow. What remained but for the worldly, money-grasping, business-loving brother to devote himself to them?

Clarence, creeping downstairs at three in the morning, found Gordon still at work. He would not leave off until he had finished, so she drew a chair close to his and helped him where she could. Then, when at last all was done, she persuaded him to go to bed, and patiently read to him until his overwrought, wideawake mind succumbed to the utter weariness of his body, and he fell asleep.

#### SIR HENRY TAYLOR'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

At the end of his book Sir Henry Taylor says: "If an autobiography is to be personally interesting, it is in some measure through the reader sharing the interest which the writer takes in himself." Indeed,

the proposition is self-evident; and Sir Henry Taylor is fairly entitled to expect from the world as much of their confidence as he, on his side, has given of his own. He has spoken openly and straightforwardly, saying as much as he would wish that the world should know. "The worst of it is," he pleads, "that one cannot whisper one's biography into the ear of the little, delicate public without being overheard by the monster." We have no right to want to know everything about any man, any more than we have a right to disturb the hours of work or of meditation of our closest friends. Sir Henry Taylor is still alive. He began his autobiography in 1865; he continued it slowly until 1877, and then had it printed privately for communication to a few friends. Until the end of 1884 no other object was intended; but he gradually thought otherwise, and now it has been given to the world. There may be some who ask who was Sir Henry Taylor, and what did he do? For, though many hundreds of his volumes have been sold, not everybody reads poetry, and still less dramatic poetry. It may be said at once, briefly, that he entered the Colonial Office early in life; he wrote a few dramatic poems—Philip van Artevelde being the best known—and also some minor poems, and a few prose essays. His literary baggage is not great, but Philip van Artevelde is one of the works of which men say that they will last as long as the English language.

Henry Taylor was born on the 18th October, 1800. He came of a north of England family, and was "the son of a younger son of an insignificant squire." There had once been an estate in the family, but he inherited only the plan of it. He speaks of his father with all affection as being good, just, and true; but he tells us he was a silent, unexpansive man, who did not desire to mix much in the world, that he preferred reading to writing, and that he undervalued every gift he possessed. He taught his three children—all boys—at home. The two eldest died of typhus-fever just at the age when they were beginning to do their work in the world. Henry also caught the fever, but slightly, and he recovered. At his own request, he was sent to sea, when he was thirteen and a half years old—this was before he took the fever—but ill-health incapacitated him from real work; and, during the twelve months that he was at sea, he never once went up the rigging. When an infant, he

lost his mother. His father married again, and Mr. and Mrs. Taylor continued to live at Witton-le-Wear until they were both nearly eighty years of age. The second Mrs. Taylor was a worthy, affectionate woman, but of a melancholy disposition. Henry found his young life at home terribly dull. Writing, after a lapse of so many years, he can recollect the delight he felt one afternoon on perceiving by his watch that the time was much later than he had expected. He says he used to read with some diligence, but with no appetite. His happiest time was at night, after his father and mother had gone to bed. Then "I sate up late, sometimes in meditation, sometimes in writing verses, sometimes abandoning myself to the pleasures of existence. Though I drank nothing but tea, there was a sort of inebriety in the nocturnal state which was no doubt exhausting, and charged the days which followed with the nervous expenditure of the nights. . . . Dull almost to disease as my daily life was at Witton-le-Wear, there were three weeks of it on which I have always looked back as supremely delightful." His father and mother went from home, and for a time the lad was master of his own actions. The inebrieties of tea were continued, and he thought himself happy. "For those never-to-be-forgotten three weeks all penalties were postponed, if not remitted, the lark took up the song from the nightingale, and my delights were prolonged without distraction of night and day, and with the intermission of but three hours of sleep begun after three in the morning." We are not called upon to say whether this plan of work was good or bad, but during those three weeks "the best of his juvenile poems, *The Cave of Ceada*, was written. The best was not bad—of its kind—nor written without a certain sort of fervour and beauty, but it was built merely upon Byron." Taylor was then from twenty-one to twenty-three years of age, and he felt the poetic temperament strongly in him. He felt a desire to write poetry, to give expression to his ideas in verse. *The Cave of Ceada*, though containing five or six hundred lines, was not his only effort. He wrote also about this time a longer poem, called *The Flight of Rhadamistus*; and also a tragedy called *Don Philip the Second*. Sir Henry Taylor insists upon a "poetic temperament" for the writer of verses, believing that without it no sort of poetry worthy of the

name can be written. When he was twenty-two he sent to the *Quarterly Review* a short article on Moore's *Irish Melodies*, and he was as much delighted as surprised, when he got a letter and a remittance in acknowledgment of his article, which was to appear in the number then about to be published. In these days Taylor made the acquaintance of Southey. The young man and the elder one—Southey was then about fifty—became fond of each other, and Taylor had a great admiration for the venerable poet. It was Southey who proposed to Taylor the subject of Philip van Artevelde for a drama.

When Taylor went to live in London, he brought with him two or three letters of introduction to literary men, among whom was Doctor, afterwards Sir Henry, Holland, and from him he got a letter one day, saying that "if his engagements would allow of it," it was proposed that he should be appointed to a clerkship in the Colonial Office with a salary of three hundred and fifty pounds at once, which it was expected would be shortly increased to six hundred, and which would ultimately rise to nine hundred pounds. We may say with some moral certainty of feeling, that if any piece of unexpected news could make the hair of a young man stand straight up on end, it would be the receipt of such a letter. But "*nous avons changé tout cela*," and the experiment is not likely to be tried. The reasons that Sir Henry Taylor gives for his good fortune are those which used to be held sufficient. "Some relatives of Dr. Holland's were old friends of my father's, and on their account he may have been glad to be of use to me; but I dare say his main object was to recommend the man whom he thought most likely to be useful." In getting rid of patronage we have also rid ourselves of the power of choosing those men who are most likely to be useful in public offices, and we also get a good many men of a kind not the most beneficial to the public service. The event happened early in 1824, when Taylor was twenty-three years of age, and immediately he devoted himself altogether to the work of his office. Of his whole official life Sir Henry Taylor speaks with the confidence of knowing himself to have been a good and efficient public servant. A considerable exercise of authority was demanded from him when he was still a young man. This was unusual; and he says that "it would, perhaps, have been still more uncontrolled, had it not been

that at this time, and for many years afterwards, my manners were against me."

In this respect he was probably not very unlike his father. He says of himself that he was "taciturn, socially sensitive, and had not the knack of knowing how to speak to people easily." He did not willingly go into society, and ten years later, after the publication of Philip van Artevelde, when he became lionised, he clearly did not like it. He says: "Of course, I, like every successful author, at his first coming forth from the jungle, was put under the pressure of London society. I had some advantages for a first appearance in it, but, taking me all in all, I was unapt." "I had real good-nature, and, as good-nature is at the root of good-breeding, I ought to have been well-bred. But I was not myself easily displeased or offended, and, giving others credit for a hardihood similar to my own, I went on my tactless way, hurting people without knowing it." Sir Henry Taylor does not say all this of himself in his own praise or dispraise, but merely because, in writing his own biography, he wishes to show to the world of to-day what he was like fifty years ago. And in another place he says: "The absence of fastidiousness made me harmless in society, but there was nothing that I know of to make me agreeable. My mind had nothing of the 'touch-and-go' movement, which alone can enable a man to take a pleasant part in light and general conversation. As to wit, I can invent it in my study, and make it spirt from the mouth of a dramatis persona, but elsewhere I have no power of producing it with any but an infelicitous effort." It is curious that this last sentence sounds almost like the echo of some lines in verse that Pierre Corneille, the French dramatist, wrote of himself more than two hundred years ago.

Mr. Taylor did not wish to call every-one his friend, but he made warm friendships in the Colonial Office, which lasted until the deaths of those whom he loved. There were "the Villiers brothers," as he calls them—the younger brothers of the late Earl of Clarendon. With two of them—Hyde Villiers and Edward Villiers—he was on terms of very affectionate friendship. And he was also intimate with James (afterwards Sir James) Stephen; with Thomas Spring-Rice, afterwards Lord Monteagle; with Sir Frederick Rogers, afterwards Lord Blackford; and with James Spedding, the author of the great

Life of Lord Bacon. One of the pleasantest parts in all biographies of our own contemporaries is to read of the friendships of men who have really liked each other and were fond of each other. We have no wish to throw a stone at Thomas Carlyle, who, with his great faults of ill-temper, was a man to be pitied; but assuredly the book now before us is more enjoyable than Mr. Froude's volumes. The only man, in his official life, of whom Sir Henry Taylor has spoken a word of disparagement is the father of the present Earl of Derby. Lord Stanley was for a time Colonial Secretary, and he and Mr. Taylor did not agree about the scheme to be submitted to Parliament for the abolition of the slave-trade. Among other friends we find mentioned Charles Austin, John Romilly (afterwards Lord Romilly), and John Stuart Mill. They all belonged to a Benthamite, doctrinaire, Radical school; but, nevertheless, as time went on, the world met them half-way, and each one of them obtained the end that he had in view.

From the way in which Sir Henry Taylor speaks of his friends, it is not difficult to perceive that he enjoyed their friendship all the more because it was not in his nature to want all the world to be his friend. And we think we can perceive the same sort of idea in relation to his own written works. In the few observations that he has made about his own plays, we see the same indications of the desire for approbation from the few rather than from the many. He tells us that "it is better to be read ten times by one reader than once by ten." We presume this refers to the reading of poetry only, not of prose. But even then we demur. To an epic poem it will apply, for the praise of one reader who has appreciated *Paradise Lost* is worth more than the shuffling, halting remarks of ten who have read it as a task; to lyric poetry we think, on the whole, it will apply also, for the enjoyment of one who really likes *L'Allegro* is keener than the half-mumbled expression of pleasure of ten whose souls or whose intellects are too dead to prize it; but to dramatic poetry, if the writer honestly, though modestly, aspires to the position of a dramatist, we cannot think the same criterion will hold good. We think that instincts of exclusiveness, or of too nice selection, are an insuperable bar to the popularity of the dramatic author, and more especially to the success of his tragedy or comedy as an acting play. His poem may

be especially charming; may fill us with a lively emotion as we read it, seated in our armchair in our own room, with the book in our hand; but unless the sympathies shown in the piece appeal to and are felt by us all as we sit in the theatre forming an individual part of the great audience, we do not think that the play can ever become popular. Then, for performance, come all the properties necessary for dramatic representation, some of which, no doubt, are technical, but all of which the true dramatist feels instinctively, for he is to the manner born. We think that when we test them by the standard for which they are fitted, the difference will be found between a dramatic play and a dramatic poem, and that to the latter class all of Sir Henry Taylor's four pieces belong. Philip van Artevelde is unquestionably the most widely read. It is called a "dramatic romance" in two parts. Macready tells us in his Diary how he enjoyed reading it, and how much he was moved by it. He put it on the stage—i.e., the first part—acting himself the part of Philip. But after a few nights it had to be withdrawn. Macready was a man of considerable culture, and he loved reading for its own sake; but it would seem that his refined taste as a scholar got the better of his instinctive judgment, or Philip van Artevelde would not have appeared on the stage.

The poem first appeared in 1834, but a publisher was not found very easily. "Publishers would have nothing to say to poets, regarding them generally as an unprofitable people." Lockhart had advised Murray to undertake it, but Murray recollected that Taylor's first play, *Isaac Comnenus*, had not been pecuniarily successful. Our author says: "He referred me to Moxon, then commencing business. Moxon told me that when authors applied to Murray to publish works likely to involve a loss, Murray was very much in the habit of referring them to him. But as I was ready to take the risk, he, of course, was glad enough to publish." Taylor turned the matter over in his own mind. He felt within him the poet's fire and the poet's ambition, and he was determined to stand the shot and abide by the result. Like Lord Byron, he awoke one morning and found himself famous. "The sale was rapid, and as the edition had numbered only five hundred copies, another had to be put in preparation without delay. Lansdowne House and Holland House, then the great receiving-houses of

London society, opened their gates wide. In that society I found that I was going by the name of my hero, and one lady, more fashionable than well-informed, sent me an invitation addressed to Philip van Artevelde, Esquire."

Towards the end of the first volume there are some amusing anecdotes about well-known men. Old Samuel Rogers, who used to say ill-natured things, was rebuked by the widow of Sir Humphry Davy. "Now, Mr. Rogers, you are always attacking me!" "Attacking you, Lady Davy—I waste my life in defending you." Another time he said of himself: "They tell me I say ill-natured things. I have a very weak voice; if I did not say ill-natured things, nobody would hear what I said." As Sir Henry Taylor says, the excuse itself contained a bitter satire. Archbishop Whateley, too, is mentioned. He was a peculiar man in many ways. He never seemed to know what his arms and his legs were doing. From his position he would naturally sit next at a dinner-table to the wife of the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and we read that the wife of one Lord-Lieutenant had to ask him frequently at dinner to be good enough to take his foot off her lap. On one occasion he listened to a very hypothetical argument, in which there were a great many "ifs," then he strode across the room to Mr. Spring-Rice and said: "If my aunt had been a man she would have been my uncle—that's his argument."

Among Mr. Taylor's friends in the Colonial Office we have mentioned Thomas Spring-Rice, afterwards Lord Monteagle. He was under-secretary in 1834. "Mr. Spring-Rice had not been above a week or two in office before he had asked me to spend a couple of days with him in a house he had taken at Peterham. In a fortnight this visit was followed by another." Mr. Taylor got to know and to like the family, and eventually married one of Mr. Spring-Rice's daughters. At first the father had objected, saying that they knew so little of each other. The aspirant felt this to be true, and he now adds: "How little is it that is ordinarily known in such cases! Mr. Rogers observed to me once that it matters very little whom one marries, for one finds the next day that one has married somebody else." Rogers remained always a bachelor.

In 1847, when Sir James Stephen retired from the office of Secretary of State, the post, which was worth two thousand pounds

a year, was offered to James Spedding, but he refused it, because "he could not be brought to believe what no one else doubted, that he was equal to the duties." The same post was offered to Taylor, and he refused it, because he did not wish to give up all his time and thoughts to his office, and leave none for his poetry. In 1848 or 1849, a poem, first entitled "The Virgin Widow," and afterwards "A Sicilian Summer," was published. "The play did not make much way with the world at first, and sharing the fortunes of Isaac Comnenus, Edwin the Fair, and St. Clement's Eve, its circumstances from first to last have been little more than half that of Van Artevelde. But it was eminently successful with some persons whom it was my greatest pleasure to please. I remember Charles Young, the actor, told me his habit on the stage was to single out some one of the audience who looked especially intelligent and interested, and act to him; and with me it has always been difficult to make much account of the abstraction we call the public, and my sense of success and my enjoyment of it has been chiefly when it has presented itself in the concrete." As to the success of St. Clement's Eve—his last published dramatic poem—he has given us another account a little at variance with the above. "The play was published in June, 1862, and met with a much better reception than *The Virgin Widow* (*The Sicilian Summer*). Of an edition of fifteen hundred, nine hundred have been sold in six months, and I think it was in the next six months that another edition appeared; not separately, however, but with my other plays and with my poems in a collective edition of three volumes."

We will allow ourselves one more quotation on this matter. Writing to James Spedding, our author says: "Did I tell you that my plays had made a leap, in 1868, to more than treble their previous sale? Since the beginning of this year, I am told that they have been selling at six times the rate of the years before 1868. Little as I like the public, I am beginning to think rather well of it. It must be applying its heart unto wisdom." From these passages, and from what has been already said, we may see plainly enough that the desire to please the large public had never been Taylor's wish. This we believe to be fatal to the success of a dramatist. He has told us himself: "I do not like the public." If the readers of his poems

would so multiply as to form of themselves a large public, that is a different thing. His plays were written to be read, not to be acted before the world in the theatre.

In the year 1861 the Taylors went to Bournemouth. They found there a house half built, which they bought and finished to their fancy. They were to live in it in the summer and let it in the winter, and live in the house at East Sheen in the winter, and let it in the summer. But in the migrations that took place every spring and every autumn, Mr. Taylor was found to be in the way, and was sent to Mrs. Cameron, at Freshwater. He had made the acquaintance of the Camerons a good many years before, and had become as fond of them as they were of him. He says that at Mrs. Cameron's house he "was not found to be so much in the way." "It was a house, indeed, to which everybody resorted at pleasure, and in which no man, woman, or child was ever known to be unwelcome." Mrs. Cameron was unconventional, but she was a very friendly and kind-hearted woman. "One day, I remember, a lady and gentleman and their daughter came to luncheon, and Mrs. Cameron, wishing to introduce them to me, took the liberty of asking what were their names. She had met them in the steamboat when crossing from Lymington to Yarmouth the day before, and had invited them without knowing anything about them." In a letter to Mr. Taylor, speaking of Tennyson, Mrs. Cameron says: "Alfred talked very pleasantly that evening to Annie Thackeray and to L. S. He spoke of Jane Austen, as James Spedding does, as next to Shakespeare! I can never imagine what they mean when they say such things." Some of us may remember that Macaulay, too, places Miss Austen as nearest to Shakespeare in one particular faculty. We refer to his essay on *Madame d'Arblay*, towards the end. That essay, however, was written in 1842, before *Vanity Fair* or *Esmond* had appeared. Macaulay's argument stretches over four or five pages, but the purport of it is that, in the true portraiture of men and women having no one passion that overrules and determines all the rest—and here Macaulay instances a dozen of Shakespeare's characters who, he maintains, are not governed by one dominant passion—he has no hesitation in placing Jane Austen as nearest to Shakespeare. Mrs. Cameron then goes on to speak of Tennyson: "He



said he believed every crime and every vice in the world were connected with the passion for autographs, and anecdotes, and records; that the desiring anecdotes and the acquaintance with the lives of great men was treating them like pigs to be ripped open for the public; that he knew he himself should be ripped open like a pig; that he knew nothing of Jane Austen; and that there were no letters of Shakespeare's or of Jane Austen's, that they had been ripped open like pigs." It is, at any rate, a genuine enthusiasm that induces most people to know something about great authors and famous poets. But there are poets of a lesser celebrity as to whom many of us feel—or we used to feel fifty years ago—compelled to read for duty's sake.

Lord Melbourne said of Crabbe: "I am so glad when one of those fellows dies, because then one has his works complete on one's shelves, and there's an end of him." But there is another class of poets still less fortunate in the world's estimation—those whose poetry does not find a place on many shelves. Sir Henry Taylor tells us—and this is, perhaps, the least wise thing in his volumes—that his friend Aubrey de Vere "observed, the other day, with some justice, that he (De Vere) could not be considered a poor man, inasmuch as it was in his power at any moment to double his income, simply by laying down his pen." It may be a little ill-natured of us to repeat this story against the unfortunate poet; for it is sad to think how many there have been whose poetical aspirations have hardly felt more of reality than a few hours of painful existence.

For ourselves we have read Sir Henry Taylor's autobiography with much pleasure as the picture of an honourable life made more glorious by the noble use of great poetical gifts. Taylor took a just pride in the possession of his powers, and any reader of his poems may perceive that in their composition he felt a lively enjoyment. In 1862, shortly after he had finished his last play, *St. Clement's Eve*, the University of Oxford honoured him by making him a D.C.L.; and a few years before his retirement from the Colonial Office he was knighted. He has given us an account of the preliminaries to this affair, and it is so amusing that we will quote it. "I got a summons to attend the Queen at Windsor the next day for an investiture of *St. Michael and St. George*, and I had not a rag of court dress. A

thousand tailors were set to work, however, and, in exactly twenty-four hours, I found myself wanting nothing except a clean shirt and a white cravat. Whilst I was dressing in the tailor's shop skirmishers were thrown out, and a shirt was seized and secured. My pocket-handkerchief was converted into a cravat, and I reached the train for Windsor just in time."

He retired from the Colonial Office in 1872, having been a public servant of the Crown for forty-nine years. There had been a question of offering a peerage to Mr. Taylor before he was knighted, but as the House of Lords had already decided against life peerages—in the case of Lord Wensleydale—the question fell through and was allowed to drop.

One very old friend—Lord Romilly—he saw again in London in the year 1875, and he speaks of him with the admiration of which a warm nature only is capable. Lord Romilly wanted Sir Henry Taylor to belong to The Club. It was long since Taylor had read his Boswell, and the words conveyed to his mind no definite meaning. At length, "my election was announced to me in the terms which were originally dictated by Gibbon, and had been used ever since: 'Sir, I have the pleasure to inform you that you had last night the honour to be elected a member of THE CLUB.' I was very sensible of the honour, and thought that Gibbon had done quite right to speak out." Sir Henry Taylor was only able to be at one of The Club dinners. He says, "There were ten besides myself. Literature and learning were represented by the editors of the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly Reviews*, and by Lecky and Lord Acton; the Church by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Dean of Westminster; the law by Lord Romilly; statecraft by Lord Derby and Spencer Walpole; and our dukes by the Duke of Cleveland. It was a curious social combination, and I thought it as agreeable as a dinner could be from which youth and women were absent."

#### THE CENTENARY OF THE BELLS.

ST. MARY'S, WAREHAM, IN DORSETSHIRE.

FOR a hundred sweet, sad years,  
Ebb of spring, bright summer's flow,  
Bitter winter, autumn's tears,  
Seasons born that they may go;  
Ringing soft, or loud, or fast,  
Tolling slowly for the past,  
Ringing blithely for the bride,  
Tolling low for all who've died.  
In yon turret ceaselessly,  
They have rung, let what will be!

Listen, on the light wild breeze,  
How the merry chimes resound!  
Battles won cause peals like these,  
Tell the tale to all around.  
Listen! 'tis the death-bell's toll,  
Let the dreary echo roll.  
Mixed are ever joy and pain,  
Tears and smiles are one again.  
In yon turret ceaselessly,  
Chimes are rung, let what will be!

Welcome to the bonnie bride!  
Love like this can never die!  
Sorrow sits his hearth beside.  
In the churchyard doth she lie;  
E'er we've dried our welling tears,  
Pass the swift, unceasing years;  
Once more chime the bells o'erhead  
And forgotten sleeps the dead.  
In yon turret ceaselessly  
Ring the bells, let what will be!

'Tis the peaceful Sunday morn.  
Ring, oh bells! across the lea;  
For another week is born,  
Bringing toil, or bringing glee.  
Listen to the happy chime,  
Like some half-forgotten rhyme.  
Toil or pleasure, bliss or bane,  
Twined and twisted in one strain  
From yon turret ceaselessly,  
Telling death and life must be!

### WHICH OF THEM?

#### A STORY IN TEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER X.

OF course, there must be explanations, and an epilogue; but fortunately there is not much to be related in that awkward pluperfect tense which is the ruin of stories.

When Mr. Picton had heard Lucy's confession, he became seriously uneasy at Alan's absence. Yorkshire had certainly received her note—the one of which Kensington was in possession—for there was his answer to vouch for it; and whether he had disappeared before his marriage, and been personated by one of his cousins, or whether he had actually been the bridegroom, and then never returned to claim his bride, it was equally certain that he was not absent with his own goodwill, leaving no word of explanation behind.

Having other affairs to attend to besides the Marstons', Mr. Picton thought it best to telegraph to Yorkshire's father, the Rev. Henry Marston, for information and instructions. But the parsonage was in an out-of-the-way village, a long way from a telegraph-office; the message was delayed on its way, and it was not until late in the afternoon that the yellow envelope brought dismay into the quiet circle. Then Mr. Marston determined to start for London by the night-train, and did so. Dusk was gathering over the Yorkshire moors when he kissed his pale wife and tearful daughters, left at home to the woman's

part of keeping the heartache warm. The dusk of a November morning had not lifted itself from the streets of London when the train at last brought him in among them. In those long, restless hours, when the fever of waking anxiety alternated with the misery of confused dreams, and short, disappointing blanks of unconsciousness, which seemed as if they must have been long, but were not, the poor father grew to feel as if it had always been dark, and always would be. The gloom of London seemed to him like the gloom which had suddenly fallen over the quiet afternoon sunshine of his life, in this terrible anxiety about the well-being—even the life—of his beloved son. He hurried into a cab, and ordered the driver to go to Kensington's chambers as fast as possible; and all the way he kept looking eagerly to one side and the other, that he might not miss a chance of seeing his boy among the dull figures that hurried or plodded along to their daily work, with heads down, in the moist, dismal air.

The cab was not five minutes from its destination, when Mr. Marston rattled wildly at the top, flung open the doors, and, almost before the astonished driver could pull his horse to a stop, had leaped out at the risk of his life, and was running back up the street. Turning round to pursue his "fare," the cabman saw him overtake a curious figure—a tall young man, with cloths wrapped round his head, and a chimney-pot hat set on above, who was staggering along, and catching at the area-railings to support himself as he went. The clergyman seized him by the arm, and he turned round, almost falling with the shock; and then there was a rapturous, confused minute of recognition, and astonishment, and relief, and dismay, and gladness, which between Frenchmen would have expressed itself in an embrace, but between two Englishmen ended in squeezing each other's hands very tightly and looking unutterable things.

The cabman soon recovered his lawful prey, and they drove to an hotel, where Alan bathed, breakfasted, and told his story. The only part of it that we do not know already is soon related.

He had for some time past been awaking at intervals, though always relapsing into unconsciousness after taking a dose from Horton. But his later wakings had begun with a dreamy, half-conscious period, in which he seemed to be asleep, but was yet capable of understanding a great deal of

what was going on; and in these the past began to return to him, and he felt a growing desire to get up and go to Lucy. When he opened his eyes, and Horton came to him with food, he would say something about getting up; but Horton always answered that he was not well enough, and then came that inevitable dose, and the equally inevitable drowsiness that swallowed up all thought and will.

But on the Thursday night Horton grew tired of his constant guard. He thought that Kensington might very well take his share of the work, and, as he was sleeping in the next room, get up if the patient stirred, give him some broth first, and some laudanum afterwards. Kensington did not much care for the part of sick-nurse, but by this time he was very much afraid of resisting Horton, and he consented. Horton had had no experience in the use of opiates, and he supposed that he had only to keep on giving Alan as much laudanum as he chose, in order to keep him asleep for as long as he chose. So he administered a double dose, entirely indifferent as to whether or not it carried Yorkshire over the border, and went off for a good night's rest, leaving Kensington in charge. It did not occur to him that the result would be the exact opposite of his intentions. He had overdone his treatment, and the final consequence was that early in the morning, Yorkshire was lying broad awake, listening to the snoring of Kensington next door, and looking at his own clothes tossed in a heap in one corner. A wild longing came over him for Lucy and liberty, a certainty that if Horton came back with his doses he should never see either again; and he struggled out of bed, and with shaking hands managed to dress himself somehow. During the process, the old woman who "did up" Kensington's sitting-room, and got his breakfast, and who had a key of the outer door of the chambers, arrived, and began her operations, so that Yorkshire's way of escape was clear. Kensington still slumbered on, while Yorkshire buttoned his overcoat together, caught up his hat, forgetful of the wet cloths that still wrapped his head, slipped out and downstairs, and emerged into the street, looking like a modern Lazarus only half resuscitated. He was wondering whether he would faint before he got to a cabstand, or be taken up for drunkenness, when he felt a grip upon his arm which at first he took for that of a policeman, and turned round to see his father.

Mr. Marston would not hear of Alan's making an exertion until he had seen a doctor, of a rather different class from his last medical attendant. This gentleman was of opinion that if there had ever been any concussion of the brain, it must have been slight, and that there was now nothing the matter with him but the effects of excessive opiates and want of food. Considering the possibility of some shock to the brain, it would be desirable that he should keep as quiet as could be for a few days; but, seeing that quiet was not promoted by mental anxiety, it would be best that he should be permitted at present to see his wife, as he appeared exceedingly desirous of doing.

"And as I should have done, my darling, whether he gave leave or not," explained Alan when relating his adventures to Lucy; "but I thought I might as well do things properly, and be a good boy as long as they gave me no reason for being bad."

Fortified by this opinion, Mr. Marston and Yorkshire set off for Russell Square, and arrived there as is related in our last chapter.

A good deal of explanation and discussion had to be gone through before everything was quite clear to everybody, and before the future course of events was decided. Kensington was allowed to make his escape, and dispose of himself as he would, without any interference; his fate was sure to be as miserable as he deserved. Brixton insisted on being upon the friendliest terms with Yorkshire, reminding everybody that he had always said that Kensington's claim to be Lucy's husband was an imposture. If anybody ventured—as Mr. Picton once did—to remind him that his own was an equal imposture, he opened his eyes widely, and denied that he had ever made any claim at all.

It was true that that silly old woman—Mrs. White—had mistaken Yorkshire for him, having her head full of the undoubted fact that he was his uncle's chosen heir; but he begged that Mr. Picton would quote a single word that he had said about having married Miss Scott. He had said that Kensington was an impostor, and so he was, and that he—Brixton—was the right man, and so he was, by Mr. Marston's decision. But Lucy had chosen for herself, and now he only wished happiness to her and his cousin, whom he heartily welcomed back to life and his good luck.

Mr. Picton found that he could not make the required quotation, and Yorkshire, who had never realised Brixton's half-hearted attempt to appropriate Lucy and her dower, was much impressed by the generosity of his present attitude. In fact, he felt himself a Jacob towards his cousin. It was a great shock to his mind when he discovered that he had become his uncle's heir by a trick, and though he did not reproach Lucy with having stolen their happiness, yet his enjoyment in their reunion, and the fair prospect before them, was so evidently dashed that it sent a pang through her heart and conscience. But, as she said often to him, and still more often to herself, what else could she have done? And it was not an easy question to answer.

Yorkshire's first impulse was to surrender all the property to Brixton, to whom Mr. Marston had destined it, reserving only a thousand pounds to enable himself and Lucy to start in Canada. But both his father and Mr. Picton descended on him in force, and reminded him that according to all his uncle's arrangements, Lucy was a co-heiress in the estate, and was intended to enjoy it, and that his being her husband gave him no right to make Brixton a present of her property, and condemn her to a life of hardships, instead of the easy and pleasant existence to which she had been accustomed, and which Mr. Marston designed to perpetuate for her. In vain did Lucy protest that she was quite willing—of her own free will—to do whatever Alan thought right. Mr. Picton put aside her protestations with a wave of his hand.

"You think so now, my dear madam," he replied; "but wait till you are trying to milk your cows, with the thermometer Heaven knows how many degrees below zero, and two of the children sick, and no doctor within forty miles—you won't be so sure of your husband's infallibility then."

Lucy blushed, shivered, and held her hands to the fire. Alan "looked on this picture and on that," and surrendered. Not altogether, though; for he did not like the feeling of having supplanted Brixton "these two times."

The funeral was celebrated with due solemnity; the two nephews and their fathers following the bier as mourners. Brixton wept copiously; was it for his uncle or for his inheritance? After the ceremony, when all the guests outside the

family—except the indispensable Mr. Picton—had departed, Yorkshire made a statement to his assembled relations. It was in this wise:

"I don't need to make any explanation to you all of the many strange things, mistakes, accidents, and so on, that have happened lately in our family. About some of them the least said is soonest mended; and the best thing we can do is to forget all the bother as fast as possible. But we must get it put straight first, as far as it can be done. It has all turned out a great deal too well for me. I have got the best wife in the world, and I have got all my uncle's money and business—much more money than I want, and much more business than I can manage. It is a great grief to me to find that he did not really intend either of them for me, but for my cousin here. However, I have the comfort of knowing that he was really fond of me, as I was of him; though he thought—quite rightly—that Brixton was a better man to look after his work, and also—in which I can't so well agree with him—a better man to look after his niece. I can't now carry out altogether my uncle's wishes. I can't give Brixton the best thing that I have won, and I wouldn't if I could. Neither can I give away all the inheritance, which our uncle intended for her, if not for me. But I have decided, and she quite agrees with me, to make over to Brixton the business, and all connected with it, as well as this house, keeping for myself Woodlands, the farm attached to it, and everything there. The furniture remains in each house as it is, except any special articles which my wife may wish for in this. The money in the bank, railway shares, and other investments, and the plate, we shall equally divide between us. All that I retain of my uncle's property is to be absolutely settled on my wife. And I request Mr. Picton to make all legal arrangements for carrying out this transfer as soon as possible."

So the astonished Brixton found himself, after all, Alan Marston, of Gracechurch Street, City. He reached the summit of his ambition while he was still young enough to enjoy it, and he enjoyed it intensely. He was rather too fond of talking about what was expected from a man in his position, but he usually did it too. He did one very injudicious thing at the outset of his career in Gracechurch Street; he offered a clerkship at a considerably better salary to the man who had

been immediately senior to him at Messrs. Timmins's. He thus trampled on the just expectations of deserving juniors in his own office; but the pleasure he derived from giving orders to that man was so intense as to compensate for much hurting of other people's feelings. But, on the whole, he was a good master, and not unpopular among his employes; and he was a first-rate man of business, and carried the name of Alan Marston even higher than it had been held before. Mrs. White was a thorn in his side. He told her pettishly that she had made a fool of him, and the sight of her continually reminded him of that unpleasant circumstance. But she was not a person easily to be got rid of, and she ruled supreme in his house, until he called in a potent ally. A second Mrs. Alan Marston dispensed with Mrs. White's services in Russell Square, as easily as Lucy was doing in Surrey. Her subsequent career was prosperous, and it was embellished by a permanent grievance in her treatment by the Marston family.

Alan of Woodlands — no longer of Yorkshire — was never so rich as his London cousin, but he was, probably, even happier, having a more delicate capacity for happiness. He farmed, he hunted, he shot, he became a J.P., and fulfilled all the duties of a country gentleman who is not burdened with a large estate. What those are, let others gifted with more microscopic vision define; but this I fearlessly assert, that Alan executed them conscientiously. Lucy, no longer kept in subjection, but moving in freedom, and crowned with responsibility, developed all her finer qualities, and taught her children courage and straightforwardness.

The two Mrs. Alan Marstons did not suit each other very well, though they were perfectly friendly; and the intercourse between the houses was limited to an annual fortnight spent by the country folk in Russell Square in May, and another spent by the Londoners at Woodlands some time in the summer.

Mr. Marston of Gracechurch Street did not care to go down in September to shoot his cousin's partridges. There were as many of them as ever, but, probably, none the more for his absence. His path in life was now so distinct from that of Alan of Woodlands that there seldom arose any confusion between them, and it was only on very trivial occasions that anyone now needed to ask the question which had once been so hotly debated—Which of Them?

### ALONG THAMES SHORE.

WITH all its nearness to the great centre of human activity, there is something lonely in the appearance of Rotherhithe as seen by the murky light of a winter's day. The railway-station itself is quiet and vault-like, and there are no vehicles to be seen outside—no vehicles, and very few people, and these mostly young people, who are making the most of their leisure by running about, dirty and cheerful, all over the road, with a fearless confidence that argues the absence of cabs and omnibuses. There are no streets to speak of, but only clusters of low sheds and small, mean-looking houses, and when streets are discovered, they prove to be mere "no thoroughfares," ending either in a monstrous pile of timber or the tall palisading of a dock. In fact, there are few such secluded places as Rotherhithe, which is just a narrow strip of river-shore, hemmed in by the Thames on one hand and the Surrey Docks on the other—a place that nobody thinks of visiting for pleasure, and whose business transactions are chiefly with the still waters of the docks on one side, and the busy river, with its ceaseless ebb and flow, on the other.

Now, the name of the place had suggested hopes and expectations—not, indeed, of anything rich or rare, but of something in the way of a hythe—an open shore with the river flowing by, a quaint row of houses looking upon the scene, and possibly a quiet little riverside public-house, frequented by pilots and sea-captains, and a glimpse of gables and high-pitched roofs in the distance. But, as it proves, there is nothing in the way of an open shore—the river-bank is shut in by lofty walls and high palings, and only here and there some narrow opening, leading to some little-used public landing-place or stairs, permits a glimpse of the darkly-flowing river beyond. Not an inviting glimpse either just now, for the river is at dead low water, with a broad muddy margin, across which stretch the remains of a causeway, covered with slime, while two or three patched and rotten boats are wallowing in the mud. And yet the half of the street that faces the river has quite the appearance of once having looked over the river, and even now from the upper windows perhaps a glimpse may be had of masts and funnels when the tide is high. For there is still the air of a quiet river

settlement about the neighbourhood. Here are pleasant little wooden houses, for instance, with their snug, homely, weather-boarded sides, all wooden-panelled within, and through the half-opened door a glimpse of funny corkscrew staircases—just such doll's-houses as please the minds of river and seafaring men. And there is a wonderful air of propriety, too, about these little wooden houses; neat little parlours with flowers in the windows, snug crimson curtains, spotless muslin blinds. It seems as if people had gone on living here for generations with as little change as possible, not far removed, and yet some way cut off from the bustle of modern life, a favoured little strip of land that the tide of affairs has scarcely reached.

And the farther we go, the more this old-world feeling comes over us. Here are inns, too, with quaint old signs, such as bold buccaneers may have smoked their quaint Dutch pipes under. Here is one nice old public-house standing by itself, weather-boarded and high-gabled, which has a peep all to itself of a strip of river with ships and boats, and which must have been thronged with master-mariners and able seamen in the good old times, when, perhaps, the royal fleet lay moored in the river, and the Royal Harry came sailing by, or the Elizabeth Jonah, flying all her colours, or Arke Rawleigh, with her gallant captain on board, bound for the Spanish Main; though, no doubt, it was quiet as death, and with only a few hobbling old veterans smoking in its sanded parlours as the press-gang dashed in with a rush, pursued with shouts and execrations by all the women of the neighbourhood. The signs, too, of the inns have the same old-world flavour. Here is Ship Argo, that surely must have borne that name from the classic age of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson; and Swallow Galley—that must have been with the fleet that sailed out to attack the Armada.

It is strange, indeed, to see how little alteration time has made in this secluded region. Here is an old map of St. Mary, Rotherhithe, a mere strip of a parish along the river bank, showing where a road cuts across the peninsula to Deptford, but otherwise with no communication with the rest of the world except by way of the river, while to the river access is easy by means of numerous stairs. There are Mill Stairs, and Church Stairs, King and Queen Stairs, Elephant Stairs, Shepherd and Dog Stairs, Globe Stairs; most

of them, no doubt, connected with taverns bearing similar signs. "Redriff Stairs" remind us that here in the name of Redriff is the popular rendering of Rotherhithe. Now, at the time this map was made, the Surrey Docks, which now with their entrances and sluices make so many islands of old Rotherhithe, had no existence, and the ground they occupy was so much marsh and pastura. We have an account, indeed, of a walk across these fields by a worthy divine of a couple of centuries ago, writing to his friend, Samuel Pepys. He had one Sunday preached at Redriff for a friend, and next morning walked with him over the fields to Lambeth. "He showed me in the passage divers remains of the old channel which had heretofore been made from Redriff to Lambeth for diverting the Thames whilst London Bridge was building all in a straight line, as near it, but with great intervals which had long since been filled up."

We may very much doubt whether the age in which Old London Bridge was built was capable of such an enormous task as diverting the course of the Thames. But there may very well have been some old channel here at the back, cutting off this great bend of the river. King Canute has the credit of having made a canal to carry his galleys round about London Bridge, which the beleaguered citizens had made impassable, and so to command the upper part of the river. Anyway, the countrymen of Canute are still thick upon the ground just here, or rather upon the waters, for these docks that occupy the bed of the old channel are thronged by the ships of the hardy Norsemen. Their timber-ships contribute the chief of the masts and sails that still find their way up the river, and at festive times the taverns along the other side of the docks are as likely to show the white cross of Norway or the red cross of Denmark as our own familiar ensign. But just now the docks are well-nigh empty, and the desolateness of their aspect suggests how the fiords are now all frozen up, and the white snow thickly piled on the branches of the tall pines—those tall trees that shall presently fall beneath the axe, and find their way, topped and squared, to float idly beneath a scum of soot and sawdust in the Surrey Docks.

The Scandinavian element, however, develops itself on the other side of the docks, where trams and railways give access to the busy world. Here at Rother-

hitherto everything remains English. No tramway encroaches on the quietude of the scene, no omnibus; the sight of a hansom is unknown, and just now the river is equally quiet. Something in the way of a pier-head breaks the monotony of the street, and here the river is in full view—the river at dead low water far below, a narrow channel between broad, flat mud-banks, with barges lying all aground on their broad, flat bottoms. On the other side rise the high bank of Stepney, with its white church shining out of the haze, the maze of houses about Ratcliffe, and the long, low shore of Wapping. It is the river pure and simple, reduced to its very lowest denomination, with not one distinctive feature to mark its banks, except here and there the tower of a church or the roof of some warehouse or factory towering above its neighbours. For all this dull depression of the scene, there is a kind of antidote in the fact that the tide has turned. Hardly as yet is the change perceptible, but an old basket that has occupied the channel and become a striking object in the absence of other craft, has suddenly stopped in its progress towards the Nore, has taken a turn or two, and then begun to drift slowly upwards. And by the time the next swing-bridge and dock-entrance is reached, there are already signs of life among the waterside population. The bridge looks down upon a lock, whose gates are now closed so that the barges therein float high above the surface of the river. The lock seems in a regular jam with barges, and broad bluff hoys, with their masts and great red sails lying all of a tangle on their decks, while the interstices are filled up with rafts of timber and solitary pine-logs bobbing about and struggling to the surface where they can. And among all these sturdy craft, which, if they stick to the river mostly, are not afraid of a blustering gale about the Nore, or a rough and tumble in the fierce tideway about Sheerness; among all these craft that are free of the Thames and seem capable of looking after themselves, there floats a narrow inland barge with a high-pitched roof—such a one as you associate with a quiet rural scene in the Midlands—the slow canal, the yellow-blossomed vale.

This barge is painted green as to the poop, with ornamental touches here and there, showing a feeling for artistic decoration, although a good deal battered and rubbed owing to the course of time

and the stress of rainy days and hot sunshine intermixed; and the name of the owner is conspicuously painted upon the high poop—W. F. Oster, Leeds, Number Ten Thousand and Thirty-two. These last figures suggest a certain pardonable exaggeration. It is difficult to believe that Mr. Oster owns ten thousand barges odd, or anything like it. The nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine are probably as yet in embryo; but even with this deduction the total would be a respectable one. And from Leeds, too, of all places in the world! How did that respectable canal-barge, whose builder seems to have had a carving-knife in his eye when he laid down the lines of her model—so crank, and narrow, and altogether on edge is she—say how did she get here? Who is there with a sufficiently accurate knowledge of our inland navigations to map out her progress from Leeds, Yorkshire? Aye, but there's the rub—is it Leeds in Yorkshire, or perchance Leeds in Kent, from which barge Number Ten Thousand and Thirty-two hails? Came she by the silver Medway into the still more silvery Thames, from under the walls of that pleasant old castle, recalling the Culpeppers and Fairfaxes of long, long ago? It might be worth while to hail the barge and satisfy our curiosity at the fountain-head. But she lies there quite silent and deserted, her hatches battened down—lies like a painted ship—painted green, you will remember, a once vivid green, with pickings out in various rainbow hues—upon a painted ocean of deals, and hoys, and scum of sawdust and shavings.

But the painted ocean itself begins to show signs of commotion, for the tide is beginning to make in earnest, and all who mean to go out this tide are making ready to depart. The great dock-basin, covered with floating timber, is shut out, and the craft in the lock are wedged together more tightly than ever; but they all mean sailing with the tide, and windlasses are clanking, while the heavy masts, with their cumber of rigging, are hoisted slowly upwards, and the great red sails flap idly in the breeze. As if some spell had been broken, all is now bustle and animation, where before was silence and repose. Men are jumping about from raft to raft among the timber, pushing here and hauling there, and shouting with all their might, and prodding with hooks, and pulling with ropes, as if time and tide had caught them unawares and passed them, and it wanted hard work

to be even with them again. But the spell still hangs unbroken about the barge from Leeds. Nothing is stirring with her, and the men who are at work upon the timber-rafts jump upon her and over her as if she, too, were but a painted log.

But presently the little green doors, or hatchways, to speak more nautically, of the barge are flung open, and a woman comes half-way up the ladder, and looks about her. A handsome, brown-faced woman is she, with a white sun-bonnet on her head, and a little gay tartan shawl about her neck, and otherwise comfortably and warmly clad; and the flaps of the sun-bonnet and the ends of the shawl flutter briskly in the blustering gusts of wind. A glimpse down the open hatchway reveals the snugest possible of little cabins—rather a cabinet than a cabin—with wonderful knobs and handles everywhere to fittings of polished wood. The corner of a bed, too, is visible, covered with a figured counterpane, while a glass lamp swings overhead, and everything is as neat and tidy as hands can make it.

Looking about her for a while, shading her eyes with her strong, but shapely brown hand, the woman in the sun-bonnet, which gleams strangely white in the yellow, foggy tinge that characterises the rest of the world—the woman, with an air at once genial and critical, shakes her head, and seems to say, “Well, if this is your London, it doesn’t visibly outshine Leeds.” And then, having taken in the surrounding circumstances, she sings out in a loud, clear voice: “John, slack off yon rope.”

The tone of the voice at once settles the question of the nationality, or, more strictly speaking, the shirealty of the barge. That voice hails from north of the Trent, and is as conspicuous in its way among the thin and reedy utterances of the rest of us as the white sun-bonnet and bright tartan shawl are in this foggy, yellow scene. But although the voice is firm and powerful, it is raised more in the way of entreaty or advice than of command. For John has made his appearance at the extreme end of the barge, where he has taken a seat upon the cargo, and is lighting his pipe in the most leisurely way. A man in a Jim-Crow hat of the ancient Saxon type, such as the jolly waggoner was accustomed to wear, and a suit of brown fustian, a plain, homely figure from the Midlands, and, like the barge, more in keeping with green pastures and soft woodlands than with these troubled waters and busy wharves.

“John, thou’dst better slack off yon rope,” repeats the woman, who is evidently John’s wife, and not without some old-fashioned notions, said to linger still in secluded villages, about the subservience of the wife to the husband. John, however, perhaps imbued with the same notions, treats his wife’s suggestions with silent indifference. And then somebody shouts an order about the paddles; and, forthwith, a man on each side of the lock, turning a winch, seem to let down the whole painted ocean, as if by machinery. Down they go with easy gliding motion—barges, rafts, and hoys, and without a hitch in the whole proceeding. All goes by clockwork, indeed, except that hatchet-featured barge from Leeds, which somehow gets hitched up when three parts to the bottom of the well. That rope that John would not slack off has proved itself, indeed, too taut; if the hawser should be strong enough, it seems as if the barge must inevitably be hauled out of the water bodily and hang there by the heels, while John and his wife and the cargo trickle out at the other end. John, however, proves equal to the occasion. He moves not a peg, but calmly awaits events. The woman looks on silently, with something like triumph in her eyes. At the last moment somebody slips along the gate and slacks off the rope, and the barge, free from perils, continues its interrupted descent. The brown-faced woman disappears into her cabin, and the gleam of her sunburnt face is seen no more.

And so the little world of boats and barges sinks lower and lower, till we idlers on the bridge can look right down their stove-pipes and see where the smoke comes from; while directly below us is the gaily-painted barge from Leeds, whose opened hatchways reveal a pleasant little interior. In the neat little cabin, all over knobs and handles, the brown-faced woman, who has laid aside her sun-bonnet, is sitting opposite a brown-faced baby, who is kicking, and sprawling, and crowing with pleasure, while the proud mother makes playful drives and lunges at him with all happiness and delight, as if the whole world were contained within that little highly-varnished box afloat—and a supremely jolly and pleasant world into the bargain.

“There’s many a worse little ’ome than that ashore,” mutters a loafer, who is waiting about in the hope of getting a job. And truly unconscious of the gallery of spectators overhead, this little scene goes



on in the dark and dripping dock, a happy speck of light in the murky wilderness about.

But now the tide is making up in hot haste; a brown turbulent flood, with greasy patches here and there suffused with colour, where they catch reflections from the painted barges or the red sails of the hoys, for with the tide a never-ending flotilla is hastening upwards. And so the lock-gates are thrown open, and the rafts and barges are turned helter-skelter into the stream.

And away goes the barge from Leeds, that does not want to go up the river at all, not that way lies Leeds, but quite otherwise. John is all alive now, and has got out the long pole, but can reach no bottom, and looks wildly about him, and seems inclined to tear his hair. The brown-faced woman is at her post, and she handles the tiller with all the dexterity of a master mariner, her sun-bonnet and gay tartan floating wildly in the air. But you cannot drive a boat against wind and tide with the tiller only. And so Leeds goes adrift; which is like going to sea on a carving-knife, eddies twisting, and tide rushing, and great steamers now floundering and booming in all directions. John may wish himself placidly tracking along the Grand Junction Canal at this moment. But there is one chance for him; a big wooden cage at the mouth of the dock affords a purchase for his long boat-hook.

"Hold fast there, and haul round!" cry the dock-keepers rather unnecessarily, for John is holding fast with all his might, but Father Thames is pulling, too, and pulling double. John holds on to the very last, till he is all but overboard, and then lets go, and away go barge, brown baby, and brown woman, the last still manfully at the helm, her shawl and sun-bonnet fluttering among the masts and sails, and so away on the brown tide.

Not very far, however, as it happens, for a friendly bargee, who is hanging safely to anchor, heaves a line to John, who catches it, and the barge from Leeds is drawn safely alongside.

Up to this moment the brown-faced woman has been silent; the baby might roar below, the winds and the waves might storm above, silent and faithful she stuck to the helm, obedient to every nod and gesture of her commander John; but now the danger was over, she straightened up her sun-bonnet, arranged her tartan shawl with an air, and prepared to descend to

her baby. But one Parthian shot she discharged:

"John," she cried, "if you'd only slacked off that rope, now, as I told you."

Somehow, after losing sight of the green barge, the way appears rather dull and dreary, not much enlivened even when we come to a tavern called The Horns, with an ancient ferry, and a crazy wooden landing-stage, everything decayed and time-worn, as if this were some half-savage wild, though here are memories of the days when the navy was fitted out from these banks—such as Ordnance Wharf and others—memories ranging from Samuel Pepys and the Duke of York to Nelson of the Nile and the Sailor King.

It is difficult to say where Rotherhithe ends and Deptford begins, but when once in the thick of the latter, the difference is rather remarkable. For here begins one of the old, narrow, evil-looking sailors' towns, with dreary slums and cut-throat looking lanes—where Polly, and Sally, and Sue hang about the doors dishevelled, and flout the passers-by. But there are redeeming points about Deptford, such as a little bit of Creek-road, and farther on a perfect little street of the eighteenth century, with nice carved door-heads, all quaint and real. A bit of faint sunshine streaming upon the red-brick walls, recalls the true feeling of the place. Evelyn and Pepys, walking down the street, grown a little old and shaky, and stared at as old-fashioned, would not be out of keeping. And the tavern, too, The King of Prussia, bears a sort of history in its sign, and the man who is busy polishing the windows would answer to "Drawer!" surely, if you called him.

As for Evelyn, who lived at Sayes Court, close by—the Court with the famous holly-hedge through which Czar Peter drove his wheelbarrow—his name—Evelyn's, that is—still is kept in mind by Evelyn Street, where a tramcar is waiting at the corner that will carry you to Jamaica, and other parts unknown. Then there is a water-gate leading down to the river, with old-fashioned houses scattered about which have seen much better days, and St. Nicholas Church, standing forlornly in a dismal neighbourhood, with a weather-worn tower and a pathetically ugly brick tabernacle attached to it. There is merit, however, in the large skulls and crossbones that grin at you over the gateway, but it is merit of a weird and depressing character.

Nor is Deptford Creek a more enlivening

object, although now full to the brim, and with two or three good-sized steamers moored in the basin, which looks several sizes too small for them. And there is a brig lying there, named the *Tiger*, which may be a lineal descendant of the craft that was chartered for Aleppo long ago.

But altogether it is a relief to turn one's back upon Deptford, and work back along the river-way to Rotherhithe, where now all the swing-bridges are up, and sea-going steamers are paddling slowly across the roadway, their red and black funnels obscuring the signs of the public-houses in the road beyond. And at each bridge waits a little knot of people and vehicles, workmen going back to work from their dinners, a waggon-load of deals, a carter's cart, the dogcart of a traveller in the timber-line, the doctor's phaeton; and then the bridge swings round again, and all move on, to be caught again and detained by another bluff-nosed steamer at the next bridge.

There is glorious idling, too, on the pier-heads, with the steamers working in, their sides well battered with the waves, and everybody glad to be in port again; and such are vastly more important affairs than the green barge from Leeds and its tiny crew. And yet our thoughts still revert to the last glimpse of that fluttering sun-bonnet. Let us hope that the gallant craft has got safely across the river to the canal-basin, and is by this time sailing over placid waters, while the tea-kettle sings a merry song in the little varnished cabin.

## LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WINNE," ETC., ETC.

### CHAPTER L.

So the London season wore itself away, the usual number of wax-candles were consumed at the inevitable balls, the usual number at the equally inevitable funerals. The bells of St. George's Church clanged over the heads of the usual number of brides, and the usual number of divorce cases came on in their usual course for hearing, and people gossiped, and flirted, and danced till their tongues and their feet grew tired, and they thought with delight, "Goodwood is coming and we are going, thank Heaven, at last!"

There were also, as usual, just one or two things people decided were worth doing before they shook their wings and took

flight—a dinner or so to be eaten in distinguished company; a ball or two worth the trouble of a new dress.

Among the latter most certainly was classed Miss Yorke's ball, for which invitations had been issued about six weeks previously.

Miss Yorke had by this time not only well-established her reputation as the beauty of the season, but also (a yet more difficult achievement) the reputation for a "taste and a refinement somewhat out of the common"—that is to say, everything she chose to do was reputed to be well conceived and well executed. Hence as a matter of common-sense and reason her one ball, which she chose to give towards the close of the season, would be perfect—nothing less, people said—as regarded the rooms, the company, the music, the supper, everything.

Assuredly neither pains nor money was spared to render it so. Uncle Hugh's bankers must have wondered over the heavy cheques he was always drawing upon them in those days. The old gentleman himself wondered over them too whenever he gave the matter a thought. That was not often, however. Somehow just then all those living in close daily contact with Ellinor seemed under a spell to lay aside their thinking and reasoning powers, and float along the tide of her whims and her wishes, helpless and unresisting.

Lucy was under the spell, not a doubt, as she flew here, there, everywhere to execute Ellinor's lightest wish, endeavouring to stand between her and the shadow of annoyances that might ruffle her composure or give her a pin-prick of pain; all the while stopping her own ears with both hands against a funereal voice that seemed perpetually trying to say into them: "Where's the use? What does it matter? What will it matter this time next year?"

And Phil was under the spell also, and as much incapable of sturdy, continued thought and resolute action as any lotus-eater of poetic legend. His whole range of thought now encompassed but one idea that might have found glad, triumphant expression in those three simple words which have been the "io pæan" of lovers of every age and generation, ever since there has been found man to ask or woman to give: "She is mine."

He did not stop to add to them—any more than did those other triumphant lovers—three other small words which might fitly have formed their corollary:

"For how long?" Why should he, indeed? Those first three were deep enough, true enough, and strong enough, it seemed to him, to express every thought, feeling, mood, of which he was capable.

He would say them when he got up in the morning, and looked through his letters and cards of invitation, and counted up the number of times he would meet Ellinor that week, and in the other weeks coming; he would say them as he rode alongside of her in the Park, and watched other men's eyes glaring and lowering at him for his monopoly of her beautiful smiles and low-toned talk; and he said them to himself on the night of her ball as he stood just within her drawing-room door watching her in her sweet, regal stateliness receiving her guests. He noted the deep, shining eyes, the high-bred smile that was poetry itself, for it said more in a second than commonplace people could speak or write in an hour; over and over again he said to himself: "She is mine—mine—mine! Let them look at her, admire her to their hearts' content, praise her rare beauty, her infinite grace; she is for none of them. She is mine only. To-night will be a night worth living. I will remember no past, I will know no future; this present hour shall contain for me the quintessence of all life."

The big, matter-of-fact house in Grosvenor Square had for the evening been transformed into a veritable dream of beauty. No walls were to be seen anywhere, a bowery greenery of palms, ferns, and mosses entirely hiding them from sight; doors everywhere had disappeared, and in their place hung curtains of a soft, thick, yellow silk. Flowers formed no part of the decorations; Ellinor had decided against them as likely to spoil the harmony of the scheme of colouring; for an equally obvious reason no coloured lamps of any tint were allowed; in fact, no lights of any sort were to be seen, though light, soft, yellowish, clear, spread itself everywhere, like a quiet sun shining through a veil of clouds. The music also seemed to flow from a hidden source; an almost woodland of palms and interlacing creepers at each end of the ballroom screening the two bands of high-class instrumentalists from view.

"If this is her idea of entertaining, how she must have suffered from our inartistic way of doing things at Stanham!" thought Edie, as side-by-side with Colonel Wickham she entered the ballroom.

This ballroom had been a concert-room,

built out at the back of the house by a previous owner. Its dimensions were good; it was certainly filled to overflowing, but it was not packed, and dancing was not only possible, but enjoyable in it. Edie, however, declined to dance.

"No," she said with decision to Colonel Wickham, "I don't mean to dance once. I don't want to stay long—just an hour or so to look round, and I don't want to be introduced to anybody except Miss Selwyn—that is"—she added, recollecting the fact of Lucy's deep mourning for the first time—"if she is here to-night. I particularly want to speak to her."

Lucy, naturally, had the choice been allowed her, would have preferred not to be present in the scene of gaiety. Ellinor, however, had only needed to give her one long expressive look, and to say meaningfully, "I shall never ask you to a second ball, Lucy," to make her feel that choice in the matter was not left her, and had she been in reality the new-made widow she always fancied herself to be, perforce she must have dared society's verdict, and acceded to Ellinor's request, let who might condemn.

The Colonel and Edie went the round of the ballroom twice, and then made their way to the upper rooms, Edie meanwhile steeling her nerves and trying to turn her heart into as near an approach to flint as warm flesh and blood is capable of.

"I shall see them together in another minute," she thought. "I shall see if Phil looks down into her eyes as he used to look down into mine! If he does—if he does, I will just give him one look—he shall feel my look right across the room—and then I'll go straight away home, never speak of him again, never see him, never—never even let his name come into my thoughts!"

And Colonel Wickham, looking down into her quiet, pale face, and wondering over her outward calmness, said to himself:

"Yes, it will be better for her to see those two together as I have seen them more than once. The first step towards a victory is to face one's enemy. Poor child! she must face hers to-night."

The drawing-rooms upstairs were three in number, two large, and a smaller room opening off the second, not in a straight line, but at right angles. Colonel Wickham and Edie made the round of the first room, recognising the few people they chanced to know there, then they went on to the

second room, and here, at the farther end, the Colonel stopped and shook hands with a slight, pale girl in some black lace-like dress, and asked permission to introduce Miss Fairfax to her. Thus Edie found herself face to face with Lucy Selwyn.

For a moment each looked at the other in silence. Lucy flushed red, and seemed painfully embarrassed. Edie kept her composure, but somehow did not look quite so pretty and childlike as when she had entered the house about half an hour ago.

The music below at that moment recommenced, and people right and left of them began to separate, and make for the ball-room.

"May I sit down by your side a minute?" asked Edie, slipping into a vacant place next Lucy.

"Come for me in ten minutes, please, Colonel Wickham," she added.

So the Colonel wandered away with the stream, and Lucy and Edie were left side-by-side alone.

"It is so kind of you to come and find me out in this way," began Lucy nervously.

Somehow she seemed to think she ought always to be thanking people for some real or imagined kindness. She never seemed free from the impression that she must have something for which to thank everyone she met.

Edie made no reply, she did not even hear the remark. All her senses at that moment were absorbed in one—that of sight, and speech and hearing were alike impossible.

From the seat which she and Lucy occupied they could see to the farther end of the small room at their right hand, and there, facing them, sat Ellinor on a low easy-chair, while Phil—sideways to them—bent over her, toying with her fan.

An idle scene, surely—a scene that was possibly in one form or another going on all over London in every house that had thrown open its doors that night, yet withal a scene that seemed to make little Edie's heart to stand still and to freeze her warm blood in her veins.

Ellinor's toilettes were always difficult to describe. The one she wore this night—selected after days and nights of protracted thought had been given to the matter—was in colour a harmony in contrast of moss-green and moss-grey—the brightest of spring-tinted forest moss subdued shade by shade into the greyest of forest lichens. It

would have been well-nigh impossible to say where one colour ended and the other began. The beautiful mosses and lichens themselves, exquisitely arranged, accentuated here and there their own colours, and harmonised brilliantly with the glittering emeralds which Ellinor had entwined in the coils of her hair, and had twisted round her neck and arms.

Gloriously beautiful, a triumph alike of nature and art, she looked with the soft light from the hidden lamps falling around and about her. And little Edie sat there gazing—gazing at her with round, staring eyes, saying to herself over and over again:

"I couldn't fancy an angel more beautiful to look at than she. Beside her I must seem like a charity-girl! And yet—and yet—— Poor Phil—poor Phil!"

Lucy waited for an answer; getting none, her eyes followed Edie's. She grew more and more embarrassed, and, no doubt, had she been given to a desperate, reckless fashion of arranging her thoughts, would have wished she had been dead a hundred years or so, and that grass was growing two feet high on her grave. She was greatly troubled. Edie's honest, sweet face had touched her, and set her wondering over her preconceived notions of the "little girl who played fast and loose," and now her long silence and fixed eyes made her tremble for what was coming.

Suddenly Edie turned her white face towards her.

"That is your doing. Are you proud of your work?" she asked, in a tone in which no one had ever heard her speak before.

Fancy a rose without its scent, a linnet without its song, a ruby without its colour! Such was little Edie to-night at Ellinor's ball.

Lucy twined her fingers in and out nervously as they lay in her lap.

"I did it for the best," she began tremulously. "Believe me, I thought of his happiness as much as hers!"

"His happiness!" said Edie, fixing full upon Lucy her dark, angry eyes. "Tell me, who gave you the right to judge what would make the happiness of a man all but a stranger to you?"

Lucy bowed her head, and hid her face.

The music below stopped at this moment, and the dancers, as before, came streaming up the stairs, seeking the refuge of the cooler rooms.

Ellinor, evidently bethinking herself of her duties as hostess, left her low chair, and came forward, followed by Phil.

At the entrance to the larger room her eye chanced upon Edie's white, frowning face. She gave her a gracious little smile of recognition, and no doubt would at once have made her way to Edie's side, and hoped, condescendingly, she was having a pleasant evening, had not a sudden stir and flutter of surprise in the farther drawing-room made all eyes look in that direction.

Then it was Ellinor's turn to grow white and tremulous, for there, in the very midst of the gaily-dressed throng, stood Mrs. Thorne, in long, black crape robes, and with a look on her colourless, rigid face which meant vengeance and a scorn of conventionalities if it meant anything at all.

#### CHAPTER LL

THE silks and satins, velvets and muslins, parted right and left to make way for Mrs. Thorne.

"Where is Miss Yorke?" Ellinor could hear her deep, solemn voice asking as she came along.

Ellinor felt her heart stand still. Not a doubt, a breach of all society's conventions was intended now. Had the choice ever been given to her, she would sooner, any hour of her life, have subsided into unbroken obscurity than have been made a theme for gossip at tea-tables and clubs. More cannot be said to express her terror of what was hanging over her head. Instinctively she half turned to Phil. He was at her elbow in a moment, standing in front of Edie to get there. Edie could have touched his arm, so close was he. He did not so much as see her.

"Where is Miss Yorke?" asked Mrs. Thorne's deep voice for the last time, and then, as she looked up and saw Ellinor, in her serene beauty, standing just in front of her, she added: "Miss Yorke, forgive me for coming in this way in the very midst of your dancing, but I have a message for you—a message that won't bear delay, for it comes from the dead."

Her face was colourless even to her lips as she said the words, but in her eyes there shone a wild glitter. Just such a look as hers might an avenger of blood have worn, who, having tracked his victim down, came upon him outside the city of refuge.

Ellinor's smiles, her commonplaces of greeting, froze upon her lips.

Phil came forward.

"Mrs. Thorne," he said gently, "if you have anything to say to Miss Yorke, will you not come quietly into another room and say it? This is hardly the place for confidences."

He made one step towards the lady, as though to offer to conduct her from the room.

Mrs. Thorne waved him off imperiously.

"Back!" she said. "Stand back! You! What, you are not content with heaping scorn and contumely on my dead son's grave, but you must need join hands with the one who drove him to his death. Back, I say, you who called yourself Rodney's dearest friend!"

Phil felt himself quail before the fierceness and desperation of her eye and voice. He had the presence of mind, however, to draw Ellinor a little farther back into the smaller room. It was by a degree or two less public than the big drawing-rooms.

A low, wailing cry at this moment came from the little group seated on Mrs. Thorne's right hand. She looked round. Her eyes rested on Lucy's blanched, anguish-stricken face.

She beckoned to her.

"Come here," she said. "I know the truth now—who loved him and who played him false. Come, stand by my side, and hear what I have to say to this evil, smooth-tongued woman, who made believe to love him, and led him on to his ruin. Come, curse her as I do! She is your enemy as much as mine. Come!"

But Lucy did not offer to stir. Her weak, trembling limbs, had she so willed it, could not have carried her over the yard or so of carpet to Mrs. Thorne's black skirt.

Phil grew desperate. Where was Uncle Hugh?—where Colonel Wickham? It was dreadful! People kept on pressing in from the other rooms. No one seemed to have any common-sense or reasoning power left.

"If she will not leave us we must leave her," he whispered to Ellinor. "Take my arm. I'll get you out of this."

But Ellinor had recovered her presence of mind now, and had decided for herself what to do.

She quietly advanced towards the elder lady and offered her a chair.

"Will you sit down, Mrs. Thorne?" she said gently.

Then she beckoned to one of the guests who was standing near, an astonished-

looking young attaché from the French Legation.

"Kindly fetch my uncle and send for a doctor. It is poor Mrs. Thorne. She is mad—utterly mad, don't you see," she whispered to him in French, and the young fellow vanished forthwith in hot haste.

Mrs. Thorne did not catch the whisper. She was at that moment engaged in unfolding most carefully two strips of note-paper: one, written in a feminine hand and signed with the initials "E. Y."; the other in Rodney's writing, consisting of some tiny fragments pieced together with infinite pains and gummed on another sheet of note-paper.

She turned her back on Ellinor and faced now the anxious, curious faces of the people who came crowding in from the other room. She was a good head taller than most women, and stood higher even than some of the men there. She held out her two strips of paper.

"You see these, ladies and gentlemen, all of you," she said, her voice making itself heard to the farthest wall. "I will tell you what they are. This one is from Miss Yorke, written about this time last year, making a secret appointment with my son, she all the time knowing he had pledged himself to marry another woman; and this other is the last my boy wrote before he died by his own hand, and in it he curses this beautiful, false woman as the one who ruined his life and sent him to his death. I will read it to you."

Phil could stand it no longer.

"It must not be; I will not allow it," he said, going up to Mrs. Thorne, and standing between her and the astonished faces around. "Read your letters, or what you will, to whom you please, Mrs. Thorne, but here it shall not be done."

But at this moment a diversion was to be effected from another quarter, for Lucy had somehow got her strength together to make her way through the throng to Ellinor's side, and had seized both Miss Yorke's hands in hers.

"Oh, for the love of Heaven, say it is not true!" she implored piteously. "Any one in the whole world, but not you—not you! Only next to Rodney have I loved you!"

"Thank Heaven! reinforcements at last!" thought Phil, as just then he caught sight of Uncle Hugh and Colonel Wickham making their way into the room.

These two gentlemen had come upon each other in a quiet corner of the

billiard-room below (for the evening converted into a refreshment-room), and had been tranquilly exchanging confidences concerning events which had happened some twenty years back, all unconscious of the storm that was raging overhead.

"Strike up at once," Uncle Hugh had said to the musicians, so soon as he had grasped the situation. And forthwith the band had broken into a lively set of quadrilles made up of bag-piping Scotch airs.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he began, as he entered the saloon, "will you be so kind as to go to the——!" he broke off abruptly—"to the ballroom, I mean. The musicians are tired of playing to the boards." Then he went up to Mrs. Thorne. "May I have the honour of taking you to your carriage, Mrs. Thorne?" he asked, offering her his arm as he spoke.

People seemed to think the kindest thing, under the circumstances, would be to leave the family party to themselves. Colonel Wickham, behind Uncle Hugh, did his best to keep the throng moving towards the door.

Mrs. Thorne's habit of courtesy for a moment returned to her.

"Presently you shall," she answered, bowing ceremoniously to the old gentleman. "But I have one more word to say before I go. A message must always be delivered—that you will admit, I suppose? It is generally admitted. Very well, I have a message to deliver to-night—from the dead to the living—and deliver it I must and will."

A fit messenger from the dead she looked, standing there tall, rigid, with ashen-grey face, glowing eyes, and white hair surmounted by her deep crape head-dress.

It was evidently no use trying to silence her. Speak she must and would.

The room was rapidly emptying now, and the three gentlemen, forming a semi-circle, stood between her and the few guests who lingered still.

"Now listen," she said, holding up her thin white hand. "I will not tell you the story of Rodney's death. You know it, every one of you—she knows it, too."

Here she turned and faced Ellinor, who, like a beautiful marble statue, stood silent there, unquailing and unabashed, while Lucy, a little in the background, in vain tried to stifle her sobs.

"She knows it, I repeat, so there is no need to tell it over again. But she does

not know—how could she?—that though she separated my boy from me in his life, she gave him back to me when she sent him headlong to his death. Night after night he stands by my side now; sometimes he speaks, sometimes he looks only, but his looks say as much as his words."

She paused, drawing a deep long breath.

"I courted a lassie for mair than a year," came up jarringly from the band below; and Lucy's sobs made an odd incongruous accompaniment.

No one tried to silence Mrs. Thorne now. Each one felt it would be useless. After all it was little more than a family circle standing there to hear her.

"Night after night," she went on, "my boy has stood beside my bed, and night after night I have said to him: 'What is it, Rodney? Shall I go curse her now?' And Rodney has said to me again and again: 'Not yet, mother; not yet.' But last night he came and said: 'To-morrow, mother, take this message from me to her who ruined my life.' Shall I tell you how he looked as well as what he said?"

Here she made one step towards Ellinor, who started and shrank back a little.

Phil managed to get between them.

"Let me take you away—come at once," he whispered.

But Ellinor put him on one side.

"I must hear it," she said faintly.

And he could see she was quivering now beneath the strong restraint she had put upon herself.

"Shall I tell you of the blood that was streaming down his pale face, or the damp, dark stains on his bright hair? No! Why should I? What would you care? You never loved his beautiful face; you never kissed his curls in his baby-days!" she went on, her voice ringing out loud and passionate. "But I will tell you what he said—I am bound to do that—word for word. 'Mother,' he said, 'take her those two letters; lay them at her feet'" (here Mrs. Thorne, stooping, laid the strips of paper on the ground between Ellinor and Lucy); "'tell her never to part with

them; they will be her passports when she gets into the other world.'"

Again she paused; and then her voice dropped suddenly to a low whisper as once more she resumed:

"This was Rodney's message. Now hear me, Ellinor Yorke, for I have a word to say to you as you stand there in your beauty and falseness. When your death-hour comes, as come it must, it will be worse a thousandfold than my boy's—more fraught with horror, with doom. God may forgive you—I cannot say; but this I know, Rodney's mother never will."

Her lips set over her last word; one wild fierce look she threw at Ellinor; then gathering together her long black robes, slowly, majestically, she swept towards the door.

But at the door she paused a moment.

"Where is that girl—Lucy Selwyn—who loved my boy truly and would have laid down her life for him? Where is she, I say?" she asked in her deep, solemn tones.

Lucy, half blinded with her tears, came out of her corner, and, shaking like an aspen, made her way to Mrs. Thorne's side.

Mrs. Thorne took her by the wrist.

"Come with me!" she said authoritatively. "Shake the dust from your feet and come. Her bread must be as poison to you, the touch of her hand contamination to you. No roof but mine must shelter you now. Come!"

She dragged the girl with her towards the door, and Lucy, giving one piteous, heart-broken look at Ellinor, departed with Mrs. Thorne.

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A Weekly Journal  
CONDUCTED BY  
CHARLES DICKENS

No. 859. NEW SERIES. SATURDAY, MAY 16, 1885. PRICE TWOPENCE.

## ONLY A BUSINESS MAN.

By MAY DRYDEN.

### CHAPTER III.

LATE as he had been at work over-night, Gordon Fenchurch started very early in the morning for the office.

It was Tuesday morning, market-day, and the streets were crowded with men hurrying to their places of business. The weather was wet and very misty; a slowly-descending drizzle of dirty rain made a dreary scene drearier.

Every face into which Gordon looked wore the same imprint of careworn anxiety; every figure told, in the narrow chest and drooping shoulders, the same tale of long hours of labour in a confined space, and of a load of care making premature old men of the bearers.

The young man had been thinking earnestly as he walked up the long street that led from the suburb in which he lived to the town. Now a sudden disgust for the life which he saw around him, and on which he purposed entering, seized him. Why should he condemn himself to an existence full of care and worry—to an existence wherein success could only be bought by the sacrifice, for many years at least, of almost all the usual delights of youth?

Entering business meant much harder work for him than it did for most young men. It did not mean attending for a certain number of hours in the day at the office of an indulgent father, doing routine work under the direction of a superior upon whose shoulders all responsibility lay. It meant for him taking up, now at once, the whole burden of the large business which before had been managed almost entirely by his father. Young as

he was, he had already gained much experience under that dearly-loved father. He knew that mentally he was able to take up his burden. But was he able physically and morally? And was he willing? His courage, which had been so high the night before, failed him suddenly.

In spite of his elder brother's opinion of him, Gordon had many delicate and refined tastes. He loved music, books, and painting. These he must now lay on one side until he had lost, perhaps, all capacity for enjoying them. How could he do it? How offer up, as a sacrifice to business, what he felt to be in many respects the highest and best part of his nature? More than that—in spite of his firm resolutions of last night, with all the aid to be obtained from his compact with Clarence, was he strong enough, wise enough, good enough to plunge into business life, with all its intricacies, temptations, and difficulties, and to succeed in it, and through all to keep his conscience clear and living, and his hands clean?

Question after question thrust itself before his mind; his brain was working so fast that he felt almost as though he were losing control over it. He reached the office-door, but, instead of entering, passed it, and turned down by the Exchange, walking faster and faster, his eyes now bent upon the ground, his head slightly on one side, his hands clasped loosely behind his back.

Oh, to be rid for ever of all this toil, and worry, and vexation of spirit! Would it not be easier far, and better, too, to leave the town at once—aye, to leave England? That was a good idea. He would seek some land far away where there were fewer people—some happy, peaceful land where he might live, quiet, and alone, and free, earning daily enough to buy his daily bread. Free? Yes; from



chains whose galling weight he knew had crushed wiser and stronger men than himself—chains which, if once they were hung upon him, he might never lay down again on this side of the grave. Yes; he would be free.

Suddenly he felt a hand laid on his shoulder, and looked up; Staniland and Mark stood before him. Both looked grave, sad, and anxious. Staniland especially so.

"Gordon," said the latter, "where are you hurrying to so fast? Have you forgotten how much business we have to do to-day?" Then, catching sight of his younger brother's intensely troubled face, he added: "It is too bad of us to lean on you so, is it not? You, the youngest of us all. But then, you see, you are the business man of the family. We should not know what to do without you. We two came to that conclusion last night, did we not, Mark?"

"Yes," said Mark. "We have decided to give you a share in the business, Gordon, if you like the arrangement."

"And Everett?" said Gordon.

"If Everett does not like it he may go. We want no more of his mismanagement. We two are competent to decide."

A brief pause of hesitation. Now, if ever, the step must be taken which would make a "business-man" of Gordon for his life, or leave him free to go where he would, and do what he would, with no needs to care for save his own. The struggle in his mind was sharp but short, and he answered soon, very, very quietly:

"Thank you. I accept your offer."

"An odd fellow," whispered Staniland to Mark as they entered the office. "I thought he would have been overjoyed, and he does not seem to care a bit about it."

Everett was waiting for his brothers, composed, dignified, and gentlemanly of demeanour as usual. He chose to be calmly and severely indignant, and somewhat sarcastic on the subject of Gordon's promotion, whereon Staniland lost his temper, and reproached him with being the cause of all the confusion into which their father's affairs had fallen. It required the use of all the tact and patience which Gordon possessed to keep the peace between the two so far as to allow of some reasonable settlement being arranged.

Mark was on Gordon's side so far as that went. He did not like quarrelling, it was so uncomfortable; he preferred

that everything should go on smoothly, without any trouble to anybody. He was sorry Everett and Staniland could not agree. For himself he was willing to agree to anything, and said so good-naturedly enough. He was little better than a fool about business affairs. Really, as Gordon told Clarence in the evening, "willing as he was to make himself pleasant and to be helpful, Mark had not sufficient business capacity to manage a toffee-shop."

All day long the four brothers and their solicitor were at work striving to disentangle the confusion into which the family affairs had drifted. The three eldest would have left some part of the business until the morrow, but though Everett talked of an appointment with a celebrated antiquarian, and Mark made piteous allusions to a pair of woodcocks spoiling at home, Gordon kept them at work with merciless persistence, so that before night they arrived at a definite conclusion as to what was to be done.

Everett was to leave the business altogether, he declining to work with Gordon. The fact was he knew that he would be forced to follow Gordon's lead if he remained in the business, and though he had less business-knowledge, he had more self-will than Mark and Staniland, and did not like the idea of being second to anyone. A large sum of money was to be found for him, wherewith he might set up in business for himself. He was tired of cotton manufacturing, he said, and intended now to turn his attention to silk. Gordon, foreseeing fresh difficulties, tried earnestly, but in vain, to induce him to remain in his old position.

Everett was obstinate, and thus Staniland became the nominal head of the old and respectable firm of Fenchurch Brothers, Gordon taking his place as junior partner thereof.

The old lawyer shook his head gravely as he walked home that night.

"Fenchurch Brothers have got into very low water," said he to his partner next day. "The old man is dead. There are heavy money embarrassments, and there is only one of the sons who has any common-sense at all."

"Which is that one?" asked the other.

"Gordon—the youngest—as shrewd and hard-headed a young fellow as ever I saw. For reasons best known to himself, his father did not even mention him in his will. He has prevailed upon his brothers, though, to make him a partner—not very

difficult to do, you know. Mark is a good-natured fool, and Staniland does not understand the business. Everett would have kept the lad out if he could. As it is, he goes off by himself."

When Gordon got home that evening, Clarence soon found out that something more than usual was troubling him, and presently won him to tell her all that had passed during the day. He did not omit to mention the struggle he had gone through in the morning.

"I feel," said he, in an utterly helpless, hopeless tone, "have felt ever since, as though I had committed a moral suicide."

Clarence did her best for him, but doubt had seized the young heart which had been so courageous the day before—doubt as to how far his action had been the result of unselfish and upright motives; how far the outcome of mere sordid promptings; and presently the sister declared she would talk to him of business no longer, lest he should end by imagining himself a miser devoured by the greed of gain.

#### CHAPTER IV.

IN his exquisitely-appointed study, Everett Fenchurch was sitting on the night which found his brother so troubled and anxious in mind. Everett, too, was a little troubled, and it worried him. He did not like to be troubled, and almost thought the Providence, with whom he was generally so well content, was using him ill when he could not spend an evening quietly and happily amongst his books. He had a new edition of Horace's Odes in his hand, and had already found more than one mistake in the editor's notes; but he could not enjoy the glow of undeniable superiority as he usually did, for the Horace was unpaid for. Everett could not forget that the bookseller's bill had come in that day, that the Horace was but a small item in it amongst many larger ones, and that, moreover, it was headed by a formidable "Account rendered." By a natural sequence of ideas, his thoughts wandered to other and larger bills than the bookseller's, and they made him feel uncomfortable. As he turned the leaves of his book, his mind was busily employed in considering how these bills might be paid with a minimum of discomfort and self-sacrifice to himself, for his creditors were beginning to point out to him somewhat forcibly that they must be paid. It was very hard, he said to himself, as he glanced round on his treasures of art and literature, and reflected

painfully that, if some way were not soon found of satisfying those greedy, money-loving creditors, the treasures would very soon be his no longer. He knew that it was quite hopeless to attempt to get more money from the firm at present. There was none to be had in that quarter, and he knew no friend from whom he could borrow. He had exhausted his available friends, and each one of them supposed that he was Everett's sole creditor, and that the occasion on which he had borrowed from him was the only one on which he had been short of money. Besides, there could be no doubt that it was a most uncomfortable thing to be in debt, especially when people seemed to feel that they would like to be paid.

Everett could only see one way out of his difficulty; he had seen it a long time and shrank from taking it, for he loved a bachelor life and bachelor comfort, and the only way of retaining his comfort now seemed to be to give up his bachelorhood. He had no need to be modest about the matter; there was no doubt that he would be able to find a wife easily. In fact he knew of the very woman to suit him; a religious, cultivated lady, with whom marriage would not be ridiculous, and one, moreover, who adored him—a dependent, easily-managed creature, too, he believed, such as a woman ought to be, and with a sum of money at her disposal, as he happened to know, suitable to his debts and habits.

Before he went to bed that night Everett Fenchurch had, with a sigh, made up his mind to marry. In the course of the next two days he proposed and was accepted—in the course of the next two months he was married.

His brothers, inexpressibly relieved, made him handsome wedding-presents, and hoped that they had shifted the family Old Man of the Sea on to the shoulders of a new Sindbad. For a time, at any rate, they were left in peace.

#### CHAPTER V.

IN a little village, about twenty miles away from the large town of Homcester, lived a large family of young people, by name Carfield. The eldest daughter of this family, Phoebe, retired to her room one day in sheer despair, feeling that nothing but seclusion for a while from the noisy and perturbed little world below, could restore her ruffled temper to its normal condition of calm and patient cheerfulness.

She did not often give way beneath her domestic troubles, but to-day they had been too much for her, and they had all arisen, as they very frequently did, out of her second brother's poetical temperament.

Daniel Carfield was about twenty years old, and he suffered from a tendency to poetry, or rather his sisters suffered from it, and he enjoyed it. Mrs. Carfield, he considered, was the only person who properly appreciated him, or would have properly appreciated him had she possessed sufficient capacity so to do. She was very proud of her darling boy's "delicate, sensitive, poetical temperament," but the girls had learned, by bitter experience, that a tendency to poetry included, in Daniel's case, a great many other tendencies, most of them very inconvenient ones—as, for example, a tendency to grumble at and despise all his surroundings, a tendency to have a very delicate appetite, and a tendency to lie in bed late in the morning. It was this last peculiarity of a poetical temperament which had so particularly aggravated Phoebe on the Monday in question.

The Carfields were in the not very remarkable position of a very large family dependent on a very small income. That being the case, it was not likely that the grown-up members of the family should be able to take life very easily. Nor, excepting Daniel, did they. He was thoroughly selfish, and so had a great advantage over his brothers and sisters. A really selfish man can generally manage to make himself more comfortable than those around him. Moreover, the principal pleasure of his life was to nurse a grievance, and he rarely found himself unhappy for want of one. As for Luke, the eldest son, and Phoebe, circumstances had never been very kind to them. They had been forced to assume responsibility at an age when properly-brought-up boys and girls still divide their thoughts between lessons and play. They had, however, faced their struggle bravely, being mentally and physically strong and healthy, and filled with a courageous determination never to be worsted in the battle of life. So far they had held their own, and Luke was now five-and-twenty, there being twenty years between him and the youngest of his seven brothers and sisters. All the responsibility of bringing up this large family fell upon Luke and Phoebe, for, as far as practical matters were concerned, Mr. and Mrs. Carfield were little

better than nonentities, two more members of the family, less easily managed than the children, because it was necessary to pay them at least an outward deference.

They had married when Mr. Carfield was barely twenty-one. His income and her fortune together amounted to about two hundred and fifty pounds a year then. In their eyes it seemed to be riches untold. Two people, they felt convinced, might live quite luxuriously upon it. So they began housekeeping, never considering that their family might increase. It did increase; but there was no corresponding increase in Mr. Carfield's salary, and plenty for two proved to be penury for ten.

Luke and Phoebe had scrambled through their childhood with very little assistance from anyone. He went to work as soon as it was possible, and she meantime struggled on at home, considering only how she might best manage so as to make both ends meet, and how the younger boys might be decently educated. She had her day-dreams, but they were very different from the romantic air-castles of most young girls. She had a very moderate idea of what happiness would be, looking forward only to a time when all the boys would be out in the world, and when Matty would be married—a time when Luke and she might live together in a little house, not being forced to work hard any more, and having time to talk and read.

Phoebe did not know what society was, had never been at a ball in her life, had never learned to dance. Her ignorance did not trouble her. She had never wished for gaiety for herself. When she thought about such things at all it was only to imagine how pleasant it would be to dress Matilda prettily, like other girls, and send her out to enjoy herself. It seemed hard to this little old woman of twenty-two that her younger sister should not have those pleasures of youth which she herself had never enjoyed.

Luke and Daniel were in the same house of business with their father—Daniel quite at the bottom of the ladder, and likely to remain there.

He was fond of asserting proudly that his nature was not adapted to the mechanical routine work of a merchant's office.

Luke had long since risen above his father, a circumstance which gave the young man far more concern than it did the old one, who was quite content to see

his son the principal supporter of his family.

Mr. Carfield was remarkable only in one way. He was of extremely venerable appearance, with an abundance of long white hair, and a flowing beard. He was tall and very handsome, and his face habitually wore a grave sweetness of expression most attractive to strangers.

Mrs. Carfield was an invalid—a pretty, feeble, untidy woman, with a querulous voice and an ever-ready supply of tears. It was sometimes suspected that she had assumed her rôle of invalid in order to cover her undeniable idleness; but I think that more probably her spirit had sunk under a weight of care taken up when she was far too young to support it. She rarely concerned herself about any household arrangements save when they interfered with her comfort or Daniel's, when she relieved her mind, such as it was, by finding fault with Phoebe.

Such were some of the actors in the drama which poor Phoebe, sitting alone in her bedroom, wearily reviewed again and again, longing the while for Luke to come home that she might pour out her troubles to him, and receive from him the comfort and help he never failed to bestow.

It had been washing-day, and she and Matty had, as usual, risen at six that they might begin the day's work in good time.

Punctually at a quarter to eight the family breakfast was ready. Phoebe carried to her mother's room the tea and toast she took before rising, and Luke and his father came downstairs. Luke always helped his sister by bringing down the younger ones for her. Phoebe saw the schoolboys off to school, and took Bunyan into the nursery, where he would be quite happy until dinner-time, she and Matilda looking in upon him now and then to see that he was all right. He was a sunny-tempered little creature, and already learning to depend upon himself for amusement.

They had all finished breakfast, and Mrs. Carfield, muffled in a dusky white woollen shawl, had taken her usual place in an armchair close to the fire, which her chilly nature necessitated all the year round. Old Ann, the one servant of the household, had long since retired to the cellar, whence a moist smell of soap-and-water filled the house, and betokened surely what her occupation was. Matilda had donned her apron, and Phoebe her thimble, and still Daniel did not appear.

Matilda, always annoyed by irregularity and delay, especially on Monday morning, grew impatient, and declared she would wait no longer for him. Daniel must be content to go without his breakfast, if he could not manage to come down in time for it.

"A little fasting would do him good," she remarked, as she piled cups and saucers upon the tray; a sentiment wherein Luke fully concurred, but which drew a few feeble tears from Mrs. Carfield, as she moaned over their unkindness to their poor brother.

"The only one of all my children," said she, "who has the divine spark of genius implanted in his bosom."

Phoebe hastened to find for her mother her only consolation in such dire affliction—a volume of the novel which was always kept on hand for her.

Matty retorted:

"On the whole, mother, I think it a very good thing that he is the only one of us so afflicted."

She cleared away the plates with an energy that made them rattle again, while Phoebe cleaned a spot from Luke's well-worn and rather shabby coat, and brushed her father's hat.

Mr. Carfield gave his daughter a kiss, and went off quite undisturbed by the little domestic fracas. He never troubled himself further about his wife's tears, than to wonder mildly that she cared to disturb herself so continually.

But Luke shook his fist at the stairs and said:

"Shall I go and haul him out, Phoebe? I will directly, if you like."

"Oh no, Luke; it would only make a disturbance, and perhaps send mother into a fit of hysterics. I have no time for that this morning. But I am so glad, my dear old boy, that you have not a spark of genius."

"Don't you think I have? Just a little, Phoebe?" asked he rather wistfully.

"Not a twinkle, dear, and it is such a mercy."

So Luke went off to his work, feeling, as he often did feel, that he must do duty for himself and Daniel too, leaving that estimable youth at home to try and fan his spark of genius into a flame.

Daniel, his mother said, was delicate, and must never go to work unless he felt able. When he did not feel able to work, therefore, he remained at home, writing bad verses and worrying his sisters, a course of

proceedings only tolerated by his principal, Mr. Hooley, for Luke's sake, he having a great respect and liking for the young man, and being unwilling to add another burden to those he already bore. On this particular morning Matty found that she had saved herself no trouble by not allowing breakfast to wait for Daniel. He came down about ten o'clock, with a face wherein Phoebe perceived signs of one of his most exacting moods.

"What is the meaning of this disgusting steam all through the house?" was his first remark.

"Washing-day, Dan," said Phoebe pleasantly. "Never mind; it can't be helped, and steam is not unwholesome."

"Indeed, I am sure it is. I can feel it affecting my chest already," and Dan gave what he meant to be a hollow cough. "Why do you allow this sort of thing, mother?" he went on querulously.

"Don't ask me," said Mrs. Carfield, throwing up her hands despairingly. "I'm not mistress of the house. I'm only your father's wife. I've said every washing-day for these two years that it would only be decent and respectable to put the washing out. But I'm nobody; nobody ever pays any attention to anything I say."

"Now, mother," said Matilda, who had just paid a flying visit to the parlour, "what is the good of talking like that? If you've said the washing ought to go out every Monday for two years, you've said it often enough, I'm sure. You know we can't afford it, and we shall not be able to afford it either while Daniel moons away half his time at home here, instead of working like a man. So let us hear no more about the washing, pray."

So saying, Matilda disappeared, leaving Mrs. Carfield silenced for the time. Daniel took a seat by the table, and putting his head down on his arms, groaned ominously.

"What is the matter, my darling?" asked his mother anxiously.

"My head, mother—it is extremely bad. Could I not have a cup of tea?"

"Of course. Phoebe, go and bring your brother a cup of tea, directly, and a slice of dry toast."

"No butter, Phoebe," said Daniel, raising his head; "unless you have some better than I had yesterday."

Now Phoebe was sewing, and it was absolutely necessary that her work should be finished that morning; but her reluctance to obey her mother really arose less

from her dislike of the trouble given her than from the knowledge that it would be quite useless for her to attempt to procure tea and toast at that time of day.

Her reply was:

"Matilda is using the fire. Could you not eat bread-and-butter this morning, Daniel, and have some milk with it?"

"Never mind me," said Daniel in a deeply injured tone. "I can do without anything." And down went his head again.

"For shame!" said Mrs. Carfield. "How I do hate such partiality! If it were Luke wanted a little bit of attending to, you'd be rushing about everywhere to get him what he liked, and poor Daniel may not have such a simple thing as a cup of tea. Go and get it for him at once, or I will go myself."

Phoebe knew that of all things she disliked, Matilda objected most to seeing Mrs. Carfield in the kitchen, and that on busy days she could never control her temper under the infliction. So, being anxious to avert, if possible, any further disagreement, she rose and timidly put her head in at the kitchen door. She never invaded the kitchen rashly when Matty was cooking.

"Go away," growled the latter; "I am busy."

"But, Matty—Daniel has come down."

"I saw him. I was surprised. I thought he must have concluded to stay in bed all day."

"He wants some tea and toast."

Matty turned round. She was stirring something in a saucepan over the fire. Her cheeks were red, and her eyes bright with the heat.

She made an undeniably pretty picture, and her pink cotton apron, with its big bib, was not by any means an unbecoming dress. But the pretty cook was obviously cross, and she shook her long spoon threateningly at her sister as she made answer:

"Phoebe Carfield! Do you mean to say that that misguided boy really wants tea and toast? At eleven o'clock on a Monday morning!"

"Not a doubt about it, Matty."

"Then inform him, my dear, with my love, that I regret that I am at present unable to satisfy his wants."

"Now, be good, Matty. How can I tell him that? He has a headache."

"Of course he has. You soft-hearted little goose, did you ever know Daniel

come down late for breakfast without a headache? But if you are afraid, take my apron and stir this. Don't you let it burn, and I will go and look after Master Dan."

Matty disappeared, and, with many misgivings, Phoebe took her place at the fire. In two or three minutes she was back again, followed by Mrs. Carfield, who, talking vehemently all the time, removed the saucepan from the fire and replaced it with the kettle. Poor Matty retired to the cellar, to try to quench her wrath amongst the soapbuds, and Phoebe followed to attempt to soothe her, leaving the kitchen in possession of the enemy.

Of course there was no pudding for dinner that night, and the cold mutton was unrelieved by any daintier dish. Mr. Carfield was cross, the boys grumbled, and little Bunyan lifted up his voice and lamented bitterly.

Phoebe comforted the children with gingerbread, and heartily wished she could find the same balm effectual in her own case.

She could not guess, our poor Phoebe, that even now the clouds were lifting on her horizon.

### BALLOONING.

CERTAIN French writers—not all—claim for France the discovery of everything, without exception, that has turned out useful to civilised humanity. They do not go quite so far as to pretend that their ancestors found out fire and its powers, although their cooks certainly obtain from them very agreeable and nutritive results, nor do they dispute with Sancho Panza whether they shall bless a Spaniard or a Frenchman for having invented sleep; neither would they rob such men as Newton or Priestly of whatever small merits may be their due; but navigation by steam, and other giants' strides on the way of progress, are maintained to be undoubtedly French in their origin and application.

Nevertheless, the French have quite enough good marks set down indisputably to their credit to keep them from denying to their neighbours some initiative in these important matters. The fact is that most great inventions have been made piecemeal. Distinct individuals, and distinct nations, have each contributed their quota of improvements, thus effecting a gradual progress from the primordial idea to its perfected completion.

No doubt the early suspicion of utilitarian possibilities has been conceived in France, as elsewhere; the hint being allowed to drop without producing immediate fruit. In the last century, for instance, the electric telegraph—I might say the submarine cable—was almost discovered on the Calais jetty; but nothing came of it at the time. But to one novel mode of communication and transport, which, however, as yet, has more amused than benefited mankind—namely, ballooning—the French have an undoubted right, as absolutely and unquestionably their own.

It came about in this wise: Pierre Montgolfier, a wealthy paper manufacturer at Vidalon-lès-Annoncey, unlike most Frenchmen, had a large family of children, two only of whom, Joseph and Etienne, became known to fame. Joseph, born in 1740, was of an independent spirit, and averse to restraint. At the age of thirteen he ran away from school at Tournon, and fed on the shellfish he found on the seashore. Sent back again in a pitiable state, he detested the literary tasks imposed on him, but was devoted to mathematics, physical science, and chemistry. Making his escape a second time, he lived by selling Prussian-blue and sundry drugs of his own manufacture and composition. Etienne, on the contrary, five years younger, was a model pupil, who grew up into an accomplished man of the world, stronger in literature than in science.

Joseph was the one who first conceived the idea of a balloon. Some say it was suggested by seeing his mother's petticoat, while being dried on an osier basket over a charcoal fire, suddenly rise from its support and mount to the ceiling. Another story is that Joseph, sitting by his fireside at Avignon, was meditating the means of getting into Gibraltar, then besieged by the English, when he saw a sheet of paper, thrown on the fire, carried up the chimney, together with the smoke. The truth is, that Joseph Montgolfier, who had studied and measured the dilatation of gases, knew that air, sufficiently warmed, becomes twice as light as before, and is able, in rising, to carry with it the envelope which contains it. A trial on a small scale succeeded. He took his brother Etienne into his confidence and partnership, and made, on Thursday, the 5th of June, 1783, before the States General of the Vivarais, the grand experiment which conferred on them a world-wide celebrity.

His aerostat, made of linen cloth lined with paper, sewed on to and supported by a network of string, was nearly spherical, and rather more than one hundred and ten feet in circumference. At the bottom a wooden frame supported the opening by which the "gas" was introduced. The machine was able to raise and carry a weight of, say, five hundred pounds English. When the eight men who held it down, at a given signal let it go, it rose with accelerated velocity at first, but less rapidly towards the close of the ascent, to the height of about one thousand toises, or something like six thousand feet. A breeze, scarcely perceptible at the surface of the earth, carried it some twelve hundred toises from the starting-point. It remained only ten minutes up in the air; the loss of "gas" through needle-holes and other imperfections preventing a longer stay aloft. The wind was southerly, with rain. The machine descended so gently that it broke neither the branches nor the stakes of the vines amongst which it fell. And this was the first balloon-ascent ever performed that we know of, since the world was encircled by an atmosphere capable of permitting it.

Note that it was Montgolfier himself who talked of "gas," with which he allowed people to believe he had filled his machines. He said nothing about air rarefied by heat, doubtless wishing to keep the secret to himself—to which he had a perfect right. Although journals did not exist at that date, the news of the experiment rapidly spread throughout all France, and everyone wanted to repeat it. The successful invasion of the regions of air now only required confirmation and improvement—which had not long to be waited for.

A young Parisian scientist named Charles—who has hardly had sufficient justice done to his merits in the annals of ballooning—could not learn what sort of "gas" the Brothers Montgolfier had employed; but he knew that Priestly had discovered, a few years previously, inflammable air or hydrogen, which is five and a half times lighter than atmospheric air. Whether he supposed that this was the Montgolfiers' gas, or whether he was inspired by a happy idea of his own, he determined also to make a balloon, and to fill it with hydrogen gas.

Subsequently, Charles greatly improved his machine. He invented the valve, the ballast, the outer containing-net, the car,

rendered the envelope impermeable, contrived a speedier mode of filling his balloon, and, in short, perfected the art of aerostation to a degree which has hardly been surpassed.

After surmounting many difficulties, Charles's hydrogen balloon rose from the Champ de Mars at five in the afternoon of the 26th of August, 1785, in the midst of an immense crowd, the firing of cannon, and a pelting rain. It mounted rapidly, entered a cloud—which was greeted with loud applause—soon emerged, soaring higher and receding farther, until it was lost to sight.

The conclusion of its airy journey, at Gonesse, is not the least curious part of its history. The natives who beheld its shapeless mass lying outstretched on the ground, half distended, swaying to and fro in the wind, took it for the skin of some monstrous animal. It was exorcised by the parish priest, fastened to a horse's tail, and dragged away. One of the boldest of the lookers-on fired his gun at it twice. From the wound there issued something like a sigh, followed by a most diabolical smell. The balloon was then torn, cut up, mutilated. When people came from Paris to fetch it, they found nothing but its shapeless fragments.

This substitution of hydrogen gas for heated air may be called the second important step in ballooning. The disastrous combination of a hydrogen balloon enclosed in a montgolfière—or balloon filled with air that was kept in a rarefied state by burning damp straw and moistened wool—was self-evidently too dangerous to be continued after its tragical results had been once experienced. The balloon proved its great superiority, both in power, endurance, and security, to the original montgolfière.

The third step was to make the balloon lift living creatures from the surface of the earth, and carry them to a distance through the air, as the roc carried Sindbad to the Valley of Diamonds. This feat, as may be easily imagined, was a speedy result of Charles's success. The King, Louis the Sixteenth, sympathised with his subjects in the desire to witness a balloon ascent. To gratify his wish, an immense montgolfière, sixty feet high, adorned with mythological emblems and the royal monogram, was prepared in the courtyard of Versailles. In spite of its vast dimensions, it rapidly filled, rose to the height of nearly two thousand feet, and fell, eight minutes

afterwards, at Vaucresson. Attached to it, in a cage, were a duck, a cock, and a sheep, which it safely deposited in a glade of the forest. The sheep, especially, appeared unconscious of its journey, and insensible to the honour of having been the first wingless terrestrial animal to take so lofty a trip in the air.

But now a new aeronaut, destined to be tragically famous—if air-navigator he can in strictness be called—appears on the scene. Etienne Montgolfier had taken, for assistant, a young man named Pilâtre de Rozier, born at Nancy, who had been Professor of Physics at Rheims. His scientific knowledge was considerable, to which were added great personal agility, manual dexterity, and no common share of hardihood. After repeated public essays in a captive balloon—the public applause on every occasion inciting him to further adventure—a voyage through the air in a free balloon was determined on. The travellers who resolved to make this first attempt were Pilâtre de Rozier and the Marquis d'Arlandes, infantry major, who, to quiet the King's apprehensions, had offered to accompany Pilâtre. Louis wanted to replace the aeronauts by two condemned criminals, who should be pardoned in case they came down safe; but Pilâtre refused to yield either the honour of the danger or the glory of success.

All went well. They attained an elevation of three thousand feet, traversed the whole of Paris, and descended at the mill of Croulebarbe. The montgolfière had proved its ability to transport them; but, if it was speedily heated, it cooled as speedily. It could only be maintained at the required elevation by keeping up the fire at a great expenditure of fuel. Charles, determined to outdo Pilâtre, and prove the superiority of his hydrogen balloon, made an ascent from the Tuileries garden, accompanied by Robert, amidst the same concourse of spectators and the same firing of guns. In two hours the balloon had reached Neales, nine leagues from Paris. The Duc de Chartres followed them across country on horseback. Just as he arrived, Robert got out of the car, but Charles remained. The balloon, partially relieved of its load, again ascended, and chanced to meet two contrary currents, the first of which carried it away, and the second brought it back to the starting-point.

Almost from the first, if not from the very first, the possibility of steering balloons in a given direction was believed

in. If it could not be effected immediately, it would be effected sooner or later. The first aeronauts were willing to believe it themselves, and had an interest in allowing others to believe it. The practical solution of the problem is still a desideratum. For, although a balloon has been steered from Meudon to Paris and back, by Captains Renard and Krebs, the feat was performed under circumstances so favourable, and by means so limited, as to deprive it of the hope of general application—at least, at present.

Charles thought the direction of balloons possible, though he admitted the difficulties of its realisation. Everybody, especially the ignorant, tried to guide balloons by the application of external machinery. If sails and a rudder direct the course of a ship, if rowers by means of oars impel a boat whithersoever they wish, why should not sails, or oars, or rudder be made to alter the track of a balloon?

But here it is forgotten that the conditions of support are not the same. A ship floats on the surface of one liquid, water, which supports it; the motive force which enables it to modify its direction is given by air, in the shape of wind, which does not support it at all, but drives it forward. In the absence of wind to cause it to move, the ship drifts helplessly whithersoever the current of water runs, exactly as the balloon drifts in the current of air. If there is neither wind nor current, the ship, like the balloon after it has attained the elevation answering to its specific gravity, remains still and stationary. Note also that these two means of support and of motion—namely, the water, and the air or wind—are separated by a plane of superficial limit which keeps them perfectly distinct and independent of each other, in action, as well as in elementary nature. With a balloon, on the contrary, the gas, atmospheric air, which supports it above the earth's surface, is the same which carries it or drives it away in a horizontal direction.

The boat, too, like the ship, floats on that limiting surface which has water beneath it, and air above. The impulsive force is given by rowers whose oars derive their motive power from the resistance given by the water beneath to the lateral pressure on it by the rowers, who are above its surface. A submarine boat below the surface—supposing its rowers capable of acting under water—could only be rowed by a most skilful feathering of most powerful



oars. Such oars, with sufficient force to work them, have not yet been annexed to a balloon. Otherwise, the conditions of a balloon are similar to those of a submarine boat sufficiently light to remain suspended in mid-water.

For a balloon does not float on the surface, but swims in the midst of an ocean of air, exactly as a fish swims in the midst of the waters of the sea. The difference of the specific gravity of the sea-water and the fish is not great; a slight effort—aided by the air-bladder, when present—suffices to support the fish at the desired elevation above the bottom of the sea; and the immense muscular force of the fish, relative to its bulk, and its weight in the water, enables it to steer its course at will.

When we can endow a balloon with a motive power as great, compared with its total weight and its bulk, as that possessed by a fish, we shall have achieved the direction of balloons—but in a measure only. For the aerial currents with which such a balloon would have to contend—tornadoes, cyclones, hurricanes—greatly exceed in velocity any known ocean or river currents against which fish are able to make their way.

The hope of this most desirable consummation has given rise to curious speculations. In 1855, Henri Giffard planned a long balloon, pointed at both ends, kept rigid by a dorsal axis or backbone, carrying a screw-propeller, a rudder, a high pressure steam-engine, with a condenser to reproduce the water expended. The scheme was to result in a monster "aeronef" capable of carrying one hundred persons with sufficient provisions, and of flying round the world in forty-one days, the journey costing only ninety-five francs, or less than four pounds, per head. But between the cup and the lip we know what often happens.

An experiment on a small scale promised well; the ascent was all right, but the descent, contrary to Virgil's dictum, was not easy—nay, was even dangerous. The whole construction pitched down on one end. The balloon, escaping from its enclosing net, started off for the upper regions. Notwithstanding which trifling check to his enterprise, Giffard did not give up hopes of success on a future attempt. But he was short of three things most useful to inventors—patience, perseverance, and money. So he took to the management of captive balloons.

For these and several other particulars I

am indebted to a capital article, *Les Ballons*, by M. J. Jamin, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*.

The next step in ballooning was to cross the sea, for which there existed political as well as scientific motives. It was desirable to be able to take a flight through the air, out of France into England, without fear of being arrested on the way. To accomplish this, a rivalry arose between competing aeronauts. Naturally, Pilâtre de Rozier expected to secure precedence in this then important matter. His tragical end has been related in an early volume of the original *Household Words*. He was forestalled in his project of crossing the Channel, though in a direction opposite to that desired, by his countryman, Blanchard, who started from Dover on the 7th of January, 1785, accompanied by Dr. Jefferies, an Englishman, who had accepted the extraordinary condition to throw himself into the sea if the balloon required easing. Though the voyage became risky towards its close, Jefferies escaped having to swim to shore. The wind was favourable, and landed them safely—that is, with only a moderate allowance of bruises—in the Forest of Guines, about nine miles south of Calais. Of course they were received at Calais with all the honours—carriage and six, city gates thrown wide open, bells ringing, flags flying, dinner at the Hôtel de Ville, and freedom of the town in a gold box, as befitted the brave fellows who, for the first time, had cleared the Strait through what are called "the realms of air."

It is now intended to celebrate, at Guines, at Whitsuntide, on the 24th and 25th of May, the centenary of Blanchard's crossing the Channel. As January is hardly the month for garden-parties, even under the shelter of a wood, the date has been transferred to that of the erection of the column which marks the spot where the balloon finally fell on the tree-tops of the Forest of Guines. The column, at present richly decorated with *Nomina Stultorum*, who have thus foolishly left their card on the departed aeronauts, is to be renovated, whitewashed, and probably scraped a little. The car of the balloon, possessed by the Calais Museum, ought, if possible, to be exhibited beside the column, in order that the public may see in what a tiny and fragile walnut-shell two adventurous heroes risked their lives.

From this spot a balloon ascent is to be performed by M. F. L'Hoste, who was the

first to pay us the return balloon-visit by crossing the Channel from France to England. On this occasion, too, he proposes to come to England, if—for, in ballooning especially, man may propose, but he cannot dispose. The last balloon visit to us from the Continent, quite unintentional and involuntary, was thus related in the Times of March 17th:

"Yesterday morning, some labourers at work in a field near Bromley were considerably astonished to see a large balloon bounding across some fields a short distance from them. It was at length brought to a standstill by the grappling-iron getting entangled in a tree. The men proceeded to the assistance of the aeronauts, who proved to be M. Ferdinand Dubois, of the Société Aeronautique of Paris, and a Belgian gentleman named Farenza. They had undergone a perilous balloon adventure, having crossed the Channel much against their will, and quite contrary to their original intentions. The ascent was made on Saturday, a few miles from Antwerp, the aeronauts intending, if possible, to descend somewhere near Brussels. All went well until, M. Dubois throwing out ballast, they ascended higher. Coming into contact with a fresh current of air, they were carried in a contrary direction, and at nightfall were carried rapidly out to sea. The aeronauts, naturally much alarmed, endeavoured to attract the attention of some vessels they saw beneath them. Failing in this, M. Dubois deemed it prudent to throw out more ballast, so as to secure as high an ascent as was deemed advisable under the circumstances. All the provisions they were provided with were some sandwiches, biscuits, two flasks of brandy, and some water. These they utilised to the best advantage, and when morning dawned they found themselves far away out at sea. For the greater part of Sunday they were over the sea, but as dusk set in they were delighted to find themselves being carried towards land. Yesterday morning they found themselves passing rapidly over a town, which they believed to be Folkestone, and they descended, as has been stated, near Bromley."

The Guines fête has some special attractions which particularly recommend it to holiday-makers from populous cities. Not to mention the Saturday's "conférence" or lecture on Blanchard's voyage and his imitators, by M. Wilfrid de Fonvielle, which will greatly interest those hearers who can

follow spoken French—far less easy than to read currently written or printed French—there are other things to tempt the visitor.

Any and every fête can offer illuminations, pilot balloons, bands of music, fireworks, and so on; but not every fête can offer the pure air, the bright, limpid waters of Guines, the fresh forest, carpeted with anemones, cowslips, and periwinkles, where nightingales are singing all day as well as all night, and jays sound their note of alarm when the curious intruder leaves the open grassy glade to penetrate the mysteries of the verdant thicket. For rare and beautiful terrestrial orchids are to be found there by those who care to search for them in season; the orchis, for instance, whose flower simulates a bee; another, pure white, deliciously vanilla-scented, besides not a few species of minor mark. From the border of this forest, the blue sea, which Blanchard and Jefferies crossed, is visible along the distant horizon. The freshness of its breezes is felt on the cheek, and inhaled with delight into the greedy lungs.

There will be a great gathering of peasantry from the interior, many of whom regard a balloon with wonderment scarcely less than that of those who beheld Pilâtre de Rozier's initial launch upwards. Duruof, the aeronaut, who with his wife nearly lost their lives in the North Sea after an ascent from Calais, subsequently came to Guines and made an ascent from the market-place, where I happened to be one of the spectators. As soon as the balloon was fairly let loose, and while Duruof was coolly scattering handbills over the heads of the gaping crowd, a peasant at my elbow exclaimed: "Oh, mon Dieu! They have let him go! What would his wife say if she saw it? Wouldn't she kick up a row at their playing him such a trick as that?"

"Well," I said, "that's his wife up there, looking out of the first-floor window. She doesn't seem to be much put out. She knows that if she were to scold ever so loud, he would very soon be out of hearing."

My neighbour gave a sigh of relief, as if secretly wishing that he, too, could be out of hearing when domestic squalls and storms arise. Duruof, for this once, cut his journey short, regaining terra-firma in time to return and sup with his friends and his expectant wife, who, I fancy, did not scold him at all.

## THE SECRET OF THE BROOK.

THE silver brook is dancing light  
 All in the golden sunshine bright;  
 Across the stones with moss bedight,  
 Its curling eddies whirl and fight,  
     In many a lovely nook;  
 It murmurs with melodious flow  
 Among the lilies white as snow,  
 As onward it doth singing go  
 Toward the mighty sea below;  
     Thus ripples on the brook.

Come to me, Love! The day is fair,  
 And blossom-scented is the air,  
 The flowers their choicest colours wear,  
 'Tis beauty here, and beauty there,  
     Far as the eye can see;

Together let us joyous sing,  
 Whilst sunny summer-time doth bring  
 Fresh life and joy to everything,  
 For Time, alas! is on the wing;  
     Come, come, my Love, to me!

There's tender music in the sound  
 Of plashing waters all around,  
 As o'er the pebbles light doth bound—  
 So light it scarce doth touch the ground—  
     The ever-rippling brook.  
 Oh, Love! each mellow, dulcet tone  
 Speaks to our souls, as here we own  
 We for each other live alone;  
 The secret of our hearts is shown,  
     And written in Life's Book.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH  
COUNTIES.

## WILTSHIRE.

WILTSHIRE is no doubt the shire of the Wilsaetan, the settlers in the wild—although it was sometimes called Wil-tunscir from its once chief settlement of Wilton. And Wilton takes its name from the little river Willey that flows thereby. But anyhow, river, town, and county are all suggestive of the wilderness, and this wilderness is still represented by Salisbury Plain, which retains a good deal of its early character; lonely and desolate, with its crown of ancient mystery in far-famed Stonehenge. And far and near the hills are scored with traces of prehistoric man—with camps, and circles, and entrenchments—while mounds and barrows without number rise on every side, the burial-places of men who fought with weapons of flint or of bronze.

Time out of mind the origin and purpose of Stonehenge have been fiercely contested among antiquarians. The traditions of the Welsh are vague upon the matter, and ascribe the placing of the stones in their present position to the spells of their great bard and enchanter, Merlin. But it seems that from an early date one of the great British temples or perpetual choirs was established in the neighbour-

hood of Stonehenge, and that it became one of the centres of British monasticism, taking its name from Emrys or Ambrose, its founder. And this monastery seems to have been respected by the Saxon settlers on the Wild, who transferred the name of Ambrose to their own settlement of Amesbury—now a village, and once the seat of the Duke of Queensberry, not far from Stonehenge.

In Wiltshire, too, we have an instance of a British city that became a populous English town—a town with its strong castle, its minster, its walls, with a colony of stout burghers clustered within, coming into the full light of history, and yet eventually abandoned, and left to the bats and owls. Old Sarum attained something like fame half a century or more ago as a typical specimen of a rotten borough. Certain men met on a grassy mound, where there was no trace of human habitation, and elected two representatives at the bidding of a neighbouring magnate. And yet the deserted mound was once the centre of busy civic life. In Roman days Old Sarum had been a district metropolis, the centre of a network of great roads, stretching in every direction. A hundred years had elapsed from the first hostile landing of the Saxons in Britain before Serebury—the sere or dry town, as dry as the sere and yellow leaf; so named from its situation at a distance from watercourse or river—fell into the hands of the conquerors. Even then the city was spared, and remained an important place, once, at least, to witness the gathering of a Saxon Witan. The numerous Roman roads that centred here made the place a convenient centre for such assemblages. At a later date, the Conqueror convened a general council of his nobles, to parcel out the lands of England, and settle that strict feudal compact which has left its traces to the present time.

In Saxon times, there had been no bishopric at Serebury. The primitive hierarchy of the native blood had sought solitude and retirement, shaded nooks by stream and mead, such as Sherbourne or Dorchester. But the worldly, civilised Norman Churchmen were not long in removing to more populous centres. Thus, soon after the Conquest, Serebury became a bishop's seat, and a cathedral was built forthwith—no doubt on the site of earlier Saxon and British churches. A strange city this must have been, closely shut in by its enormous ramparts, where the

gloomy Norman donjon, and the equally gloomy towers of the massive cathedral, excluded the sunshine from the narrow crowded streets, where canons, students, pedlars, and rough men-at-arms jostled each other in promiscuous confusion. From the ramparts, indeed, a pleasant sight met the eye; the fertile valley of the Avon, where the river, breaking through the ramparts of the hills, pursues its winding way towards the New Forest; with here and there a village on its banks marked by the brighter green of the surrounding fields, and the church tower rising darkly from among the sheltering trees. The sheltered valley below seemed a very land of promise to the chilly and sensitive Churchmen. The canons shivered in their surplices as the wind whistled through the sombre arcades of their dim cathedral. Sometimes, howling through the openings of the lantern tower, the storm would overpower the voices of the choristers, as if the old heathen gods, who had been worshipped there long ago, resented the performance of these elaborate Christian rites. And then the water-supply was scanty.

The art of well-sinking must have been practised in England long before historic times, else how account for those ancient camps and fortresses on the hill-tops, where springs were non-existent, and where deep wells must have been the only means of supplying the garrisons? However this may be, there were deep and excellent wells in the city of Old Sarum; but these, of military necessity, were under the control of the castellan, who exacted payment for the supply of water to canons and townspeople; the first instance, perhaps, of a water-rate in our annals.

Moved by these considerations, the Bishop resolved to transfer both church and clergy to the banks of the river in the fertile vale below, and with the consent of King and Pope, the foundations of the new church of Salisbury were laid, in the early years of the thirteenth century, with much pomp and ceremony, at a spot near the meeting of the Avon and two of its tributary streams. Pandulph, the Pope's legate, is said to have laid the first stone in honour of Pope Honorius; the second stone was for the King, and the third for the Archbishop. The great Earl of the county, William Longespee, laid the next stone, and after him his Countess wielded the trowel, and other great nobles flocked to join in the pious work, and dedicated a part of their revenues for seven years to

come towards the expenses of the building. In a few years the church had so far advanced to completion that a portion of it was consecrated for public service, and the great Earl, who had helped to lay its foundations, was the first to be buried within its precincts.

A rising city thrived and prospered about the new cathedral, and the citizens of Old Sarum removed their dwellings to the new site. The building of a bridge over the Avon in 1244, and the diversion of the highway, gave the coup de grâce to Old Sarum, whose buildings fell to decay, so that by the middle of the fifteenth century the whole site had become a desolate solitude. In the seventeenth century, Samuel Pepys, not a romantic or imaginative traveller, riding over the heath, guided by the sight of Salisbury steeple, records: "I saw a great fortification, and there light, and to it, and in it, and find it prodigious, so as to fright me to be in it all alone at that time of night."

The cathedral of Salisbury, built from the foundations during the best period of Gothic architecture, is notable for its grace and finish, although, perhaps, it lacks something of the picturesqueness of the irregular outlines of many mingled styles.

Famous in history, but of small account at the present time, is Clarendon, an ancient seat of the English kings, and probably of British and Saxon kings before them, with extensive foundations, covering sixty or seventy acres, but with only a rude fragment in an upstanding state. Here was held the great council which settled the affairs of the Church in the Constitutions of Clarendon, and at which Becket and King Henry came to loggerheads. We may call to mind, too, some notable Earls of Clarendon, whose title was taken from this deserted palace.

Notable, too, in political history is the adjoining village of Farley, whence sprang the Fox family, whose founder, Sir Stephen Fox, of obscure, if respectable parentage, followed the fortunes of Charles the Second in his exile, and was so successful in financing the household of the impecunious prince that he was rewarded at the Restoration with the more lucrative office of Paymaster-General of the Forces. The better-known Charles James Fox, the great Parliamentary leader, seems so essentially a modern figure that it is rather startling to find him the grandson of one who had been a servant of King Charles the Second, a few generations thus covering such a

large space of time and such vast social changes. Sir Stephen largely benefited his native village, building church and almshouses, and leaving many memorials of his generosity.

Farther to the south, on the banks of Avon, lies Downton, famed in legendary lore as the dwelling-place of Bogo, Beirs, or Bevia. In evidence of which is one of the most remarkable of existing pre-Norman monuments, known as the Moot, a series of immense earthworks, with a conical mound in the centre, the latter probably used by the Saxons for local and national assemblies, although tradition—not to be despised in this connection—ascribes a still more ancient origin to the place, even to the days of mighty Arthur and his table round. Another entrenchment of unknown origin and great antiquity is known as Grim's Ditch, and marks the boundary of some forgotten kingdom, while farther to the west the Arthurian tradition is continued in Garven's Barrow, near Broad Chalk:

That Garvayn with his old courtisye,

who still abides in Fairyland, although now and then he may be permitted to revisit the glimpses of the moon over his old hunting-grounds, still often resounding to the music of horn and hounds.

Many are the woods and chases in this southern part of Wilts—a part cut off from the rest of the country by the broad wilderness of Salisbury Plain. And traces of the old forest laws have come down to modern times. A great hunting-ground was Cranbourn Chase, that at one time seems to have joined the New Forest on the one side, while it stretched almost to Salisbury city on the other. Thus, till recently, in the fence month—for fifteen days before Midsummer Day, and for as long after—every waggon and packhorse passing over Harnham Bridge, close by Salisbury, was liable to pay toll for the benefit of the forester, on account of the disturbance to the deer while dropping their fawns. At this period a pair of horns were fixed over the bridge as a warning to travellers to keep themselves and their dogs in order in passing along the highway.

Remains of the ancient forest exist in the numerous parks and woods in this part of the country. There is Wardour, with its ancient ruin and classic mansion, the seat of Lord Arundel, which has given its name to Wardour Street, Soho; and a

little to the north lies Fonthill Abbey, of more recent fame as the seat of Alderman Beckford and his son, the eccentric author of *Vathek*. The glories of Fonthill, built by James Wyatt in his best style of debased Gothic, with a tower near three hundred feet high, soon came to an end. The tower fell down in 1825 with a crash that destroyed the best part of the edifice, and there is now little to be seen of this ruin of modern times.

Near the south-west angle of the county, where Somerset, Dorset, and Wilts meet, lies Mere, with its handsome church; and still farther west, in a nook that is almost surrounded by Somersetshire, is Stourton, with Stourhead close by, with its singular springs—six of them in all, three in Somersetshire and three in Wilts—which form the source of the river Stour; a river that follows a winding independent course right across the county of Dorset, till it falls into the Christchurch Estuary close to Avonmouth. And this Stourhead, with its park and mansion, is one of the most ancient seats in the kingdom, a Saxon fortress *lang syne*; but in modern times the seat of the Hoares, whose name is equally familiar in Fleet Street as in Wilts.

Of this family was Sir Richard Colt Hoare, renowned for his *Monumental Histories of Ancient and Modern Wiltshire*,—monumental truly in size and weight—the last in six huge volumes, the thinnest of which is a good load for a topographical student; but a monument also of a rational employment of cultured leisure and unstinted wealth. Of his own prosperous and unchequered career the historian gives a short sketch. "Suffice it to say that in my youth I was initiated in the business of our family bank, till my grandfather removed me from it and gave up to me, during his own lifetime, all his landed property." But during all his long life, the chief delight of this worthy baronet was in the history and traditions of his own county.

Visitors to Salisbury Cathedral will notice the fine effigy of Sir Richard Hoare among the monuments of the worthies of the county. There may also be noticed a plain altar tomb, in memory not of a worthy indeed, but of one of the former lords of Stourton, to which attaches a strange and sinister interest. Six openings in the tomb represent the six springs of Stour, which the lords of Stourton bore in their coat-of-arms. Till within the present century there was suspended over

the tomb a wire noose, which significantly conveyed to the passer-by the fact that he who rested below had been hanged. The story of Lord Stourton's fate, apart from its tragic interest, conveys such a curious picture of the manners of the times, and of the district which formed the scene of its occurrence, that it may be well to tell here an oft-told tale that may now have become new again from its very antiquity.

We must go back to the reign of Edward the Sixth, when every parish, and almost every household, was divided against itself by unhappy religious dissensions. Charles, Lord Stourton, was the son of one of Henry the Eighth's captains, who had lost his life at the siege of "Bullen," and his mother had been one of those proud and aspiring Dudleys into whose generous veins some malignant fairy seems to have squeezed a drop of black and murderous blood. His high connections brought Lord Stourton into active political life; he voted frequently in the royal council, generally in a sense opposite to the Reformation, and he was one of those who cast to his death the ill-fated Seymour, Duke of Somerset. The example of his noble relations, who unhesitatingly did to death any who came in their way, although preferably by due form of law, encouraged, no doubt, in Lord Stourton a certain unscrupulous, arbitrary way of action, that was likely to prove inconvenient in private life. And in his private life he had many things to try him. Old Evergreen, his father, had married again, late in life—the Lady Elizabeth having been conveyed to the tomb—a young wife, doubtless, one Mistress Ryce, according to the record—probably a stirring, black-eyed Welsh Dame Rhys. And the old man had left to Madame Rhys the greater part of his disposable goods and chattels, while, backed up by the steward of the estate, one Hartgill, she seems even to have taken possession of the family mansion, and held it against Lord Stourton *vi et armis*.

Here, however, Lord Stourton had the law on his side, and he succeeded in turning out Madame Rhys, who took refuge in the house of Hartgill, the steward. Now, this Hartgill had been once a favourite retainer of Lord Charles. He had killed a man in a broil, it is said, and was therefore glad of such a powerful protector. On his part Lord Charles was glad to enlist a man with such strong recommendations in his favour, and treated him

well, and even went to the expense of ten groats in masses, to clear Master Hartgill of the sin of homicide. Thus it was the terrible ingratitude of the man that angered Lord Stourton to madness, when he who had risen under his patronage to be steward, and whom he had put as a sort of *locum tenens* into the manor of Kilminster—which had once belonged to the Church, and which he could not conscientiously hold himself—should turn round and defy him. However, his lordship determined to be reasonable and conciliatory, and, going to Hartgill's house with only a dozen or so of stout fellows at his heels, he put it to his old retainer calmly: Will you and Dame Rhys enter into a bond, under such and such tremendous penalties, that she shall never marry again, or take her ill-got belongings into the house of a stranger? Hartgill would have nothing to say to this, and my lord took his refusal in high dudgeon.

On Whit Sunday, in the morning, when service was going on, no doubt according to the new prayer-book—for the Hartgills were staunch for the Reformation—Lord Charles came to Kilminster Church with a great many men armed with bows and guns; when John Hartgill, the steward's son, a tall, lusty young gentleman, hearing the clash of arms outside, drew his sword, and cut his way through the host in the churchyard to his father's house. Divers shots were made at him, but he escaped them all, and, arming himself with a long-bow, and causing a woman-servant to follow him with a cross-bow and gun, the brave youth drove Lord Charles and the bulk of his men out of the churchyard. But a portion of the assailants had entered the church in search of the father, who, being old and scant of breath, thought no shame to take refuge in the church-tower with his wife and three or four serving-men, where they barricaded themselves against their assailants. John, seeing how matters stood, hailed his father in the tower, and asked him what he should do now. "Ride away to Court and tell the council how I am used," cried the old man. And John, having hastily provisioned the tower with such victuals as could be hauled up by ropes, took horse and rode off for London, or Windsor, or where the Court might be, and laid complaint before the council. The council acted with promptitude, and sent the sheriff of Somerset to the scene with all haste.

The sheriff arrived at Kilminster on the

Wednesday and released old Hartgill from the church-tower, where he had been besieged all this time. Lord Stourton did not venture to try conclusions with the King's officer, and accompanied the sheriff to London, where he was admitted to the Fleet; but there he tarried not long. His friends in the council were too powerful for the Hartgills, and when my lord was released he hastened home to take his revenge.

And thus, during all King Edward's reign, Lord Stourton continued his malice against the Hartgills, seizing corn and cattle whenever he could lay hands upon them, so that the family dared stay no longer in the neighbourhood, and took refuge elsewhere.

When King Edward was dead, however, the Hartgills, in person, made humble suit to Queen Mary for justice, when she was lying at Basing End, in Hampshire. Lord Stourton, as a zealous Catholic, was in personal favour with the Queen, notwithstanding his connection with the Dudleys, while the Hartgills, being of the Puritan persuasion, could hardly expect much favour. But, with all her faults, Mary had a royal sense of justice, and she called on Lord Stourton to make amends. And so my lord promised that if the Hartgills would come home and desire his good-will—a relic of the almost-forgotten homage due to the lord of the fee—he would take them under his protection and restore all their goods and chattels. Upon this the Hartgills rode homewards, taking a witness to their submission, but were set upon on the way by Lord Stourton's men, who left John Hartgill for dead by the roadside, while the father and his friend escaped unhurt.

John, however, recovered from his wounds, and haled Lord Stourton before the Star Chamber, which imposed a fine for the benefit of the Hartgills, and committed my lord once more to the Fleet. Lord Stourton, however, soon got his liberty on bail, and rode away to spend his Christmas at Stourton. Then he sent word to the Hartgills that he was ready to pay them the Star Chamber money, and desired to come to an end of all disputes, if they would appoint a meeting. The Hartgills, still doubting, as was natural enough, his lordship's disposition, appointed the Monday after Twelfth Day, in Kilminster Church porch—a very usual place to receive and pay legal obligations. And Lord Stourton was punctual to his tryst, but

came with fifteen or sixteen servants of his own, and a great company of knights, justices, and other gentlemen, in all about sixty in number.

It says something for the state of manners in the west, that the sight of all these knights and justices, so far from reassuring the Hartgills, filled them with dismay. With just forebodings, they could hardly be prevailed upon to approach, but came forth at last upon the word of the knights and justices that no harm should befall them. My lord had taken his station at the door of the church-house—the usual meeting-place of the village council, where they feasted afterwards—as vestrymen have done in later times.

My lord had spread his baits; a bag of money and sundry papers appeared on the table before him. They should have their money, every penny of it, as the Hartgills approached; but, first, my lord would know them to be true men. These words were the signal agreed upon between Lord Stourton and his men, who closed in upon the unfortunate Hartgills. "I attach you of felony," roared his lordship; and this charge was held to absolve the knights and justices from their pledged word. The Hartgills were bound hand and foot, and thus left prisoners at the parsonage; while John's wife, who had come to her husband's help, was brutally cut down by Lord Stourton. Some form of law was preserved in all this lawlessness; for the Hartgills were dragged to a house near Stourton, and there examined by two justices of the peace—friends of my lord—who made out a mittimus to send them to gaol. But Lord Stourton, knowing how poor an account he could make of all this before the council, now gave rein to his murderous passion. At night he sent four of his servants to bring the Hartgills before him, bidding them significantly knock the captives on the head if they were troublesome.

And then the old man and his son were dragged forth and knocked on the head with clubs, while my lord stood at the door of his gallery, which was scarce a quoit's cast from the place of execution. The bodies of the victims were dragged to his lordship's feet, when, as they stirred and groaned, he bade the others cut their throats. And when this was done, one at least of the poor, brutal hinds who had too faithfully done their master's bidding, awoke to the horror of the deed.

"Ah, my lord, this is a pitiful sight!"

cried the repentant murderer. "Had I thought that I now think before the thing was done, your whole land could not have won me to such a deed."

But Lord Stourton bade the men take heart, for it was no more than killing two sheep.

At the foot of the gallery-stairs was a pit or dungeon, belonging to the old castle, and into this the bodies were thrown; while two of the men were let down with ropes into the dreadful oubliette and buried the bodies deep beneath stones and rubbish.

But justice was at last aroused, and those who had been the wicked lord's accomplices now hastened to denounce him. And presently we find Lord Stourton arraigned at Westminster Hall, before the judges and divers of the council. Sullenly he held his tongue, and mutely refused to plead, till the Chief Justice sternly declared that if he would not answer, he should be pressed to death. He made no further defence, and, cast by his own words, was condemned to die. And from the Tower the sheriff of his county took him, and they rode by leisurely stages towards Salisbury, and there, in the early morning, Lord Stourton was hung—with a silken rope, it is said—with one of his men by his side. The other three ruffians were hanged on the scene of their crime. And thus ended a tragedy that made a great impression on the men of the west, although it is strange to find that the sympathy of the county gentry was rather with "this unfortunate nobleman," as he is euphemistically called by the historian of Wilts, although at best but a cowardly ruffian, than with the victims of his crime.

A narrow belt of fertile land connects the two sections of Wiltshire, otherwise so completely severed by the wild of Salisbury Plain, with Heytesbury (locally known as Holdsbury), Warminster, and Westbury, as so many stages in the highway that leads to the local capital of Trowbridge—a district, this, where the cloth trade still survives, and makes head against the competition of Yorkshire and the Continent, and which has preserved for West of England cloths the reputation they enjoy. Then we come to Bradford, which is the Bradford over the river Avon—the Bristol Avon, that is—while, a little higher up the river, we come to Melksham, an ancient town that, after many ups and downs, has attained to some prosperity as an agricultural centre. The mineral waters which

abound in the neighbourhood suggested the attempt to establish a rival settlement to that of Bath; but fashion refused to transfer its favours to the new spa, and the baths and pump-room have been turned to other uses.

A little to the north of Melksham runs a well-defined Roman road connecting Bath and Marlborough, with the remains of an intermediate station at Heddington, where many Roman relics have been discovered. Not far distant is Bowood, the seat of the Pettys, a family which sprang from the great clothing industry, the first of whom to attain celebrity being Sir William, Physician-General to the Army in the time of the Commonwealth, and one of the early members of the College of Physicians and the Royal Society. Bowood itself formed part of the great forest called Pewsham, and was disafforested in the days of the great Oliver. The deer with which the wood was stocked had to be conveyed to Spy Park, through Locks-hill Heath, across which it is said that the clothiers of the neighbourhood constructed a way skirted with broadcloth, along which the herd were safely driven.

Laycock Abbey is close by—an interesting mansion, embodying the remains of the old nunnery, with its cloisters, offices, and refectory, while the bell that softly sounds the hours is the matin-bell that called the nuns to prayer. The nunnery was founded by Ela, the widow of William Longespee, a dame devout and fair, whom the King's justicier, Hugh de Burgh, it is said, attempted to corrupt during her husband's lifetime; but, failing in his purpose, he poisoned Earl William, who certainly died with suspicious suddenness after partaking of a feast of reconciliation with the enemy of his domestic peace. The Earl, it may be remembered, was the son of Henry the Second and Fair Rosamond, to whom tradition has ascribed a like tragic ending. Dame Ela, however, remained faithful to her husband's memory, and in the end took the veil in her own convent, of which she became Lady Abbess.

On the extreme border of the county hereabouts is the pretty valley of Box, with Boxbrook flowing through it, and the famous tunnel of the Great Western Railway burrowing beneath. Near the entrance of the tunnel is Corsham, with its ancient hospital, of which Hasted, the Kentish topographer, was once the master. The parish church, too, is ancient and fine, and Corsham Court, the seat of the Methuen



family, is a well-known show-place, with a good collection of pictures.

To the westward, the Fosseway forms, for a couple of miles, the division between Wilts and Gloucester, and then lies in Wiltshire altogether till near Malmesbury, where it again forms the boundary-line for a space. At Malmesbury, the famous abbey is represented by portions of its once magnificent church, which now form the parish church. "Where the choir was is now grass-grown, where anciently were buried kings and great men; King Athelstan's grave now an asparagus-bed," writes John Aubrey, the antiquary; and this is a reminder that we are now in Aubrey's county, although he is better known as the author of a perambulation of Surrey.

Aubrey was born at Easton Piercy, not far from here, in 1629, and some of his gossiping notes about his own neighbourhood are interesting. Draycot House was not far off, which Aubrey remembered as the seat of Sir Walter Long, a friend of Sir Walter Raleigh's, "and was the first who brought tobacco into use in Wilts. In those days the gentry had silver pipes. The ordinary sort made use of a walnut-shell and a strawe"—a hint here for modern pipe-makers. "Within these thirty-five years it was scandalous for a divine to take tobacco." In those days tobacco was worth its weight in silver, and, says Aubrey, "I have heard some of our old yeomen neighbours say that when they went to Malmesbury or Chippenham, they culled their biggest shillings to lay in the scale against tobacco."

And Aubrey dwells with regret on the former state of the county before it was cut up by enclosures. "This county was then a lovely compain. In my remembrance much hath been enclosed, and every year more and more. There was then a world of labouring people maintayned by the plough. There were no rates for the poore even in my grandfather's daies, for the church ale at Witsuntide did their business."

Quaint, too, is the story of how Newton parish got its common. "King Athelstan having obtained a victory over the Danes by the assistance of the inhabitants of this place, riding to recreate himself, found a woman bayting of her cove upon the way called the Fosse, which is a famous Roman way that goes from Cornwall to Scotland. This woman sat on a stoole, with the cove fastened by a rope to the legge of the stoole. The manner of it occasioned the King to ask why she did so.

She answered the King that they had no common belonging to the town. The Queen being then in his company, by their consent it was granted that the town should have so much ground as the woman would ride round upon a bare-ridged horse." The good woman undertook the task, and carried it safely through, since which time Newton has had its common, and up to the end of the seventeenth century, and perhaps later, commemorated the gift yearly by a kind of feast, one of the most striking features of which was "a mayd of the town, with a ghirland round her neck," who is to be kissed three times by a bachelor of some other parish, who, in his turn, "wears the ghirland, and is kissed by the mayd." Then there was a prayer, and, in the end, a big supper.

The wild country begins again as we approach Marlborough with her stretching downs, and, on the way, a relic of pre-historic times in a wonderful stone circle at Avebury; not so imposing as Stonehenge, as meadows, cottages, and enclosures now occupy the site, but more extensive, and betokening some high ceremonial purpose—whether of Druidic rite or some still more ancient cultus, it is hard to say. But enough has been written on the subject to fill many portly volumes, and that without arriving at any thoroughly satisfactory conclusion.

## LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNN," ETC., ETC.

### CHAPTER LII.

THEN all those assembled there, looking one into the other's face, drew a long breath.

They felt as spectators of an acted tragedy feel sometimes when the curtain drops on the closing scene, the lights are turned up, and things become comfortable and commonplace once more.

In very truth, although madness had shone in Mrs. Thorne's eyes, could be heard in her voice and seen in her every gesture, it was withal a madness so dignified, composed, methodical, they dared not think of her as some half-dazed, half-crazed lunatic, uttering wild ravings, but rather as some grand, tragic actress, who, carried away by intensity of emotion, over-did her part.

Uncle Hugh was the first to recover his powers of speech.

"Of course she is mad—utterly mad," he muttered; "but she won't be able to

find her carriage—nearly everyone seems going just now. I'd better see after her, I suppose;" and he forthwith departed, grumbling in his heart at himself all the way downstairs for having been such a fool, when he settled down a confirmed bachelor, not to have turned misogynist also, and kept clear of the female sex, one and all. "From Eve downwards, all the misery and discomfort in the world could be traced to their fingers," and so forth.

"Come, let us go, Edie," said Colonel Wickham, drawing Edie's arm within his. "I should say the flavour had gone out of the evening's entertainment now for you."

Edie hesitated only a moment to take one long steady look at Ellinor, who, white and silent, still stood within the smaller room exactly in the posture in which she had placed herself to receive Mrs. Thorne's maledictions. She was terribly unnerved—Edie could see that, and had to steady herself against a small table with her hand.

Phil stooped to pick up the two letters still lying at her feet, crumpling them in the palm of his hand as he did so.

"Give them to me," said Ellinor faintly; "I wish to keep them;" and in spite of Phil's demur she closed her trembling fingers tightly over them.

It was an odd situation—old loves, new loves, first loves, and last loves thus brought within a few inches of each other on the same square of carpet, each with a heart full of jarring, disturbing memories, each with a future so full of portent they could not bring themselves to look it in the face. An altogether overstrained situation for them one and all. Time, however, was not given them to lay stress upon it, for the music again paused, there came the rustling of skirts and tread of feet along the rooms and passages once more—a few stragglers wandered in at the farther door.

"Come, Edie," said Colonel Wickham once more; "the sooner we get away the better now."

Edie, with an effort, rose from her chair. For the moment her own heartaches seemed to sink into insignificance. Beside Mrs. Thorne's, indeed, they must have been as pin-pricks to sabre-cuts. Mad that bereaved mother might be—perhaps was—yet there was that in her madness which, to Edie's mind, at any rate, bore witness to the foundation on fact of those awful accusations she had brought against Ellinor.

Edie's movement seemed to act as a tonic on Ellinor. She made a huge effort—a visible one, for Edie could see the deep breath she drew, the tightening and clasp-ing of her hands together to stay their trembling. Then she came forward with as sweet and serene a smile as woman's lips could wear.

"It's 'How do you do' and 'Good-bye' in one breath, I'm afraid, is it not? I hope you have had a pleasant evening, Edie," she said, holding out her hand.

The time was getting so short now, not one opportunity would she let slip of triumphing over those who had lovers, and did not know how to keep them.

Also it behoved her to show, not only to Edie, but to everyone who had eyes wherewith to admire her, how little shaken she had been by Mrs. Thorne's wild denunciations and Lucy's abrupt departure.

Edie made no reply, did not offer to take the outstretched hand.

Friends of Colonel Wickham coming into the room at that moment, he was called upon to exchange civilities with them.

It was altogether a new experience to Ellinor to have her extended hand unappreciated. Edie should pay for her obtuseness.

"I am afraid poor Mrs. Thorne's wild ravings must have scared you; you will be glad to get home, won't you? Shall I ask Phil to take you down to your carriage? Colonel Wickham seems engaged with his friends."

Not six months ago a speech of this sort would have brought forth a perfect hurricane of retorts from Edie's lips, or, at any rate, one that would have equalled a March north-east wind for its cutting bitterness; but to-night, somehow, Edie seemed careless alike of sarcasm or innuendo. Her face grew very white, very solemn; her eyes seemed full of a deep pitifulness.

"Poor Ellinor—poor Ellinor!" she said in low, strained tones. "From the bottom of my heart I pity you."

Her eyes wandered for just one moment from the beautiful, brilliant face confronting her to that of forlorn-looking Phil, who stood a little in the rear, moodily leaning against the mantelpiece, and she repeated once more with even a sadder accent than before:

"From the bottom of my heart I pity you!"

And in very truth at that moment it

seemed to the girl, as she thought of Rodney Thorne's death, of his mother's madness, of Phil's enthrallment, and her own empty heart, that the woman at whose door these sorrows were to be laid might well be pitied for the heavy reckoning that must be in store for her.

Ellinor drew back startled. Mrs. Thorne's denunciations had shaken her nerves; Edie's pity cut her to the heart.

Phil, looking up at that moment, saw thus standing face to face, his old love and his new one.

For one instant there came a tumultuous rush of old memories, hopes, longings. It seemed as though, in spite of everything, Edie must belong to him still, as though there and then he must get back possession of her, let who would say nay. But the next, Ellinor's beautiful eyes looking up into his had said "Back" to all the old hopes, memories, and longings, as one with enchanter's wand might say to the rough, encroaching waves that threatened to curl round his feet.

"Come, waltz with me," she whispered softly. "It will be my first waltz to-night—my last this year. Come!"

Edie spoke never a word during the short drive home, but when she kissed her good-night to her father she rather startled him by saying a little abruptly:

"I think after all, papa, you are right, and the sooner we get back to Stanham the better it will be. I don't mind if we pack up and set off to-morrow."

#### CHAPTER LIII.

THE extraordinary conduct of Mrs. Thorne at Miss Yorke's ball naturally was the subject of much comment, and received the usual amount of attention for the usual nine days. All sorts of wild rumours were afloat concerning it. That the lady was mad—hopelessly mad, everyone was ready to admit, and everyone agreed with everyone else that it was a pity some of the poor lady's intimate friends or relatives had not interfered and prevented her making an exhibition of herself. Of the exact reason for her disturbance of the harmony of Ellinor's ball, scarcely anyone seemed to have any distinct idea. Thanks to the intervention of Uncle Hugh and Colonel Wickham, very few of the guests had heard the half of what Mrs. Thorne had to say, and those who had heard the half, from their own imagination evolved another half, making a whole as unlike the real circumstances of the case as could well be imagined.

Concerning Lucy Selwyn, the wildest reports were spread abroad. Here people had to trust entirely to their powers of invention; very few were in possession of the facts of her real relationship to the dead Rodney. She had generally been supposed to be a companion to Miss Yorke, and a dependent on her bounty. Lucy's naturally timid, unassuming deportment had, no doubt, in the first instance, given rise to this idea. Now, by a sudden revulsion of opinion, she was set down to be an heiress whom Mrs. Thorne had destined for Rodney's wife, but who had somehow, through Ellinor's machinations, been cajoled from her destiny. So Mrs. Thorne had swooped down upon the pair, carried Lucy off, and given Ellinor "a piece of her mind."

These were some of the more connected of the many extravagant rumours that went the round of the clubs and drawing-rooms towards the end of that London season. In the nature of things they only reached the ears of the persons most concerned in the matter in disjointed fragments or whispered innuendoes. Even these fragments and innuendoes, minute as they were, disturbed Ellinor's peace of mind not a little.

Talked about she always had been—those who stand head and shoulders higher than the crowd must expect to be; also, no doubt, envious tongues had always been willing to spread abroad spiteful little stories about her and her doings. She had taken good care, however, by paying scrupulous attention to the conventionalities of life, never to give substance or colour to these spiteful little stories, and they had consequently died a natural death. But who, in the name of common-sense and reason could expect so easy and painless an ending to these reports which Mrs. Thorne had so absurdly emphasised by her wild extravagances? It was annoying and irritating to the last degree, more especially so at that time, with the programme she had sketched for herself only three parts played out. She grew morose, silent to all about her (except Phil), denied herself to all visitors, and began to think in her own heart that the sooner the last act in that programme was begun the better.

Far otherwise it was with Lucy Selwyn. She had not been brought up in a class of life that paid much attention to society's verdicts, good or bad. Also she had so much food for thought at that moment

that she had neither time nor ears to give to outside gossip.

In the space of about three minutes as many terrible and undreamed of revelations had been made to her. First had come to her the knowledge that Edie Fairfax was not such an one as she had imagined, and that consequently by ill-advised interference she had done her best to wreck the happiness of a true-hearted girl. Next had come the revelation of Rodney's treachery to herself, and the real cause of his awful death. And thirdly, and possibly worst knowledge of all, because more present and actual, was the fact that Ellinor, the one whom in all the world she most loved and trusted, was the woman who had been the cause of his treachery, and had participated in it. It was altogether awful, bewildering—too much even to shed tears over. It was the sort of thing to send a woman to her death-bed, it seemed to her. Possibly, if not to a death-bed, it might have sent her to a sick-room had it not been for Mrs. Thorne's serious condition at the moment, which withdrew her thoughts from herself and her sorrows, and absorbed every minute of her time.

Strangely enough, Mrs. Thorne, when she left Ellinor's doorstep, had ordered herself to be driven, not to Rodney's rooms, but to her own house in Eaton Square. Arrived there she had essayed to take Lucy upstairs to her room, had fallen in a fit on the lowest stair, and had with difficulty been restored to consciousness. The doctors called in had declared her condition to be critical, and had given numerous and minute orders as to her treatment, for the carrying out of which they looked to Lucy, as the only responsible person in the house.

As for Mrs. Thorne herself, she would not allow Lucy out of her sight, even for her meals. One fit followed another with a dangerous rapidity; they were generally preceded by periods of wild ravings, during which, to her disordered fancy, Rodney stood by her side and joined in her vehement denunciations of Ellinor's falseness. They were succeeded, as a rule, by quiet, sane intervals, when she insisted on giving instructions for the making of her will, supplementing them by many and minute verbal directions to Lucy, which she bound the girl with solemn promises to fulfil.

Lucy was to be her heiress, inheriting every penny she had the right to leave away from the Thorne Hall estate, and Lucy was to remain unmarried to the end

of her life, devoting herself, her time, her money, to Rodney's memory, to the erection of a memorial mausoleum, which was to surpass in beauty and grandeur anything and everything the world had ever seen, and to the carrying out of every one of her dead boy's wishes that she had ever heard him hint or speak, or could find trace of in his piles of manuscripts.

It was terribly pathetic, this iron-hearted mother so weak in her remorse and regrets!

It was heart-breaking, brain-bewildering to Lucy to have to stand there by her bedside, hour after hour, sole recipient of these tragic confidences.

But she knew just as well as did the doctors, who paid their daily visits, that the strain could not be for long, and that already the fiat had gone forth which would give to the poor distraught brain peace, and to the overtaxed heart everlasting quiet.

#### CHAPTER LIV.

EDIE went back to Stanham not quite the same Edie who had quitted it some three months previously. Her captiousness and nervous irritability had deserted her; she had grown thoughtful, silent, less inclined to keep up the appearance of the false gaiety on which at one time she had seemed to think her existence depended.

To say truth, she was asking herself a question or two just then which she found somewhat difficult to answer. Like all generous-minded persons, she was always willing to bear her share of the blame when things went awry, and now it seemed to her that a very large share of blame was her due for the course they had taken of late. The scene at Ellinor's ball had not only startled, pained, shocked her, beyond all description, but it had set her thinking, wondering, and asking herself uncomfortable questions, to which naught but uncomfortable answers could be given.

Question Number One, as might, be expected, related to Phil and Phil's love-affairs, and demanded, with a rude, sturdy importunity that would not be silenced—would he have been taken captive by Ellinor and her numerous fascinations if she, little Edie, had not driven him—yes, absolutely driven him—there was no other word—from her side!

The only answer to this could be an unqualified and most positive "No."

Question Number Two brought Ellinor before her in all her beauty, her falseness, her coquetry. Well, she—little Edie—had

renounced a whole chapter of denunciations on this woman for the way in which he led men on with her arts and wiles, and made them make love to her, just for the pleasure of saying "No" when they asked her to marry them. But was she aware that she herself ought not to come in for her share of such denunciations? Might he not, in very truth, had a judgment-seat been set, and had she been called to the bar of it, have been judged out of her own mouth?

There was Lord Winterdowne. It was true she had done her best in the end to save him the mortification of a refusal at her hands, but ought not that best to have been done in the beginning instead of in the end, and the man have been prevented from indulging hopes that could never be ratified?

And Colonel Wickham! "What about him?" demanded Conscience roughly, persistently. "You who had guessed at his early life and bitter disappointments, what right had you, least of anyone in the world, to make him play all over again that sad drama of younger days? If it were done from purely selfish motives to save yourself some slight personal annoyance, it was cowardly, mean, detestable; if from sheer thoughtlessness, it was only by one degree less culpable."

This last question weighed on Edie greatly. It sent her to bed every night with a heavy heart; it awoke her in the morning with the sense of guilt upon her conscience, and at last became so intolerable that it drove her to Colonel Wickham's side with something like a tear in her eye, saying:

"Colonel Wickham, will you spare me five minutes? I have something to say to you."

Colonel Wickham had not returned to Stanham with the Fairfaxes, but had lingered on in London a week or so to superintend the finish of his rotatory calculating-table. On his return to Wickham Place the said table had been installed with due honour in "Blue-book Parlour," and a message had been dispatched to the Squire asking him to come and inspect its merits. Edie had from her window watched her father going through the shrubbery on his errand, and she had watched him return arm-in-arm with the Colonel, engaged in energetic conversation. At the gate leading into the gardens of the Hall, the two gentlemen had parted, the Squire making his way into his stables to give some

necessary directions, and the Colonel going with slow, lagging footsteps back through the shrubbery to his own house.

Then it was that Edie had flown downstairs like a lapwing, skimmed over the sunshiny lawn—tilting her sun-bonnet over her nose as she went—and had got to Colonel Wickham's side with her tremulous question before he had so much as heard her footfall.

The Colonel looked a little surprised.

"Of course, my child, talk to me as long as ever you like, I am only too delighted to listen," he said kindly, standing still among the larches and nut-trees.

But Edie very much preferred walking on. It would be so much easier to say what she had to say side by side with the Colonel than right in front of him with his large eyes looking down into hers. So she went on ahead among the tangle and briar, the catch of a blackberry-bush giving her now and again the opportunity to pause and arrange her thoughts.

"It's about myself I want to talk this morning," she began a little timidly. "I have been very, very wretched lately—I don't know whether you know why?"

"I can see many reasons why you should not be so happy as you were some little time back, Edie."

"Oh, I don't mean that," said Edie hastily, guessing at once to what he referred; "I mean about something quite different—about myself, my own conduct, the way I've behaved lately to people—to you, especially, I mean."

"To me, child! What are you talking about?"

"Oh, I know what I'm saying. I've behaved horribly, abominably to you, and—and I want you to forgive me."

"Edie, Edie, there's some mistake here. What can I have to forgive you for? Why, we are always the best friends imaginable."

"Oh, dear, why don't you understand—why do you make me say it all out? I mean about being—being engaged—and—and—not being engaged. Don't you understand?"

"But, Edie, we talked all that out in London, you know, and it is now quite a thing of the past. Don't let us speak of it again. Come in and see my new table—it's a splendid little thing, as near perfection as can be; works to five places of decimals, and can be adjusted by a screw to any required height. Why, even you, Edie, could sit down and work out your rule of three by it."

Edie, however, was in no mood to talk about calculating-tables, let them be ever so near perfection. She ignored the latter half of his sentence, and brought out her next words with a rush.

"But it is not a thing of the past with me, and never will be, and I can't forgive myself, and—and— Oh, don't you see?"

Colonel Wickham paused in the middle of the long grass right in front of Edie, taking both her hands in his.

"Now—now, Edie, say no more about it, unless you want to give me real pain. It's all over and done with, don't you see? It was just one of little Edie's whims—nothing more, and we are all used to them by this time."

Edie struggled hard to free her hands.

"But it isn't over and done with—it need not be, I mean— Oh, why are you so dull? Why do men always make people say things right out? They never jump at things and understand them in a minute as women do without being told."

"Give me half your meaning, Edie, and let me see if I can jump at the other half—as women do."

And here the Colonel released her hands and let her walk on ahead as before.

But evidently even half the meaning was difficult to express, for Edie walked on in silence, stamping petulantly on the half-ripe nuts which the over-laden trees had here and there shaken to the ground.

They had reached the gate at the farther end of the miniature woodland before she opened her lips again.

"It was only this I had to say," she began, toying with the latch of the little gate as she spoke, "that if—if—if—you would like us to be engaged again—I mean really, honestly engaged—it should be as you wished."

Edie grew very white and forlorn-looking with her last word.

All the immensity of the sacrifice she was volunteering had come upon her as she had made her pitiful little speech. She knew her life must be an even more dismal thing than it promised now to be if the Colonel were to take her at her word. But there, that would concern no one but herself. The words were said, thank Heaven! and with the desire still strong upon her to make amends for the pain she had so unwittingly caused to her oldest, best friend, she resolved she would not go back from them.

The Colonel made no reply.

Edie grew frightened. Had she done

anything egregiously, outrageously wrong? she asked herself. He could not misunderstand her, surely? Ah, there was still something she had not said—something she had made up her mind to say when she was "screwing her courage to the sticking-point" that morning.

She went to the Colonel's side, laid her hand upon his arm, looking up sweetly and apologetically into his face.

"I think I ought to tell you—I'm sure you ought to be told," she said in a low, nervous voice, "that—that I haven't a whole heart to give you; that to the very end of my life if I tried my hardest, I couldn't get—get Phil out of it; but still—"

Colonel Wickham looked down into her white face pityingly.

"Edie," he said gravely, "I understand all—every word of what you want to say. You think you have something to make amends to me for, and in order to be very thorough in your amends, would make yourself and me miserable for life. Child—child! it is all a mistake from beginning to end. You've done me no wrong whatever, and therefore have nothing in the world to make amends to me for. Old hearts like mine, you know, get very flinty as time goes on, and require a hammer and chisel to make any mark upon them. So don't worry yourself any more on my account."

Edie's tears fell in a shower.

"If you forgive me, I can never, never forgive myself," she said.

Something of a smile—a wan, wintry sort of smile—flitted across the Colonel's face.

"Try, Edie," he said; "most things can be done by good, hard trying. Try to forgive yourself, and—may I say it?—try to forgive Phil too—believe me, he needs your forgiveness just now."

Edie gave a great start away from the Colonel's side, and stood a yard or so off, staring at him.

"I know what I'm saying," he went on. "I've asked an unconscionable thing of you, and now I am going to ask something still more outrageous. I am going to ask you to try and forgive Ellinor Yorke also."

Edie drew a long breath, and got back her powers of speech. She shook her head.

"I'm not at all Christian-like just now, and I can't forgive anybody. I can't forgive myself for all my wickedness from

beginning to end; I can't forgive Phil (though I pity him—oh, you don't know how much); I can't forgive Lucy Selwyn."

Now it was the Colonel's turn to start.

"Lucy Selwyn!" he exclaimed. "Why, Edie, what can she have done to injure you? You spoke to her for the first time at Miss Yorke's ball the other day!"

The words had escaped Edie unawares. Now she was bound to explain them.

"I mean," she said, hesitating a little, "I can't forgive her for the letter she wrote, asking me to give up Phil. There, it doesn't matter much; I dare say I should have done it, when I found how things were going on, without any asking."

"She wrote asking you to give up Phil!" repeated the Colonel musingly. "Ah, I see—I see;" and as he said this, a hundred thousand things, inexplicable before, began to explain themselves to him.

"Of course," Edie went on, getting her colour back, and speaking rapidly, "I don't feel so bitterly towards her as I do towards Ellinor. I may forgive Miss Selwyn in time, but Ellinor I never—never can forgive, so please don't ask me to do so."

"I do ask it. I repeat my request, Edie. She needs—she will need your forgiveness even more than the others. It will cost you a great effort; try to begin to make it at once."

Edie shook her head.

"It would be impossible. If I were to say I forgave her it would be all pretence. When I think of all the misery she has caused everybody, of that poor Rodney Thorne shooting himself, of his mother's madness and broken-heart, of even Lucy Selwyn's misery, it seems to me there never could have lived such a wicked, hard-hearted girl before. Sometimes—oh, often, I think the sooner she goes out of the world the better it will be for everyone left in it!"

"Edie, what if she be going out of the world a little faster than people think?"

Again Edie started in her astonishment. Then she found breath to say:

"Ellinor Yorke! Oh, impossible!"

"It is nevertheless true. It startled me terribly when I first heard it—through Phil. It was when I questioned him as to the when and how he intended to be married that he let out the truth that Ellinor's lungs are affected, and that she will not hear of marriage. I got it out of him with great difficulty. You must not

speak of it, Edie. But now tell me, do you not feel it makes it a little—little easier for you to forgive her the wrong she has done you and others?"

"It makes it easier to forgive Ellinor, perhaps, but"—and here her small mouth set firmly—"a thousand times harder to forgive Phil, though I can't tell you exactly why."

She felt in her heart, though she could not put it into words, that there was a heavy load of condemnation to be borne by these two—that if Ellinor were to be remitted her share, Phil, of necessity, must carry a double load.

"Of course it will be hard—very hard for you, I know, child. The better you have loved him, the harder it is to forgive him. But, Edie, I am an old man now; and one or two things I have learnt as I have gone through life must be worth listening to, mustn't they?"

Edie bowed her head in assent.

"Very well, then listen to this little truth I have picked up by the way somehow, and try to act upon it. There is no peace, no real happiness in life for man or woman till they have acquired what we all so blandly attribute to God Himself—an endless capacity for forgiveness."

Edie did not speak for a minute or so. When, at length, her words came, they were wavering and slow. "I will try to forgive them all," she said; "but I won't promise you I shall succeed. The more I think of it the harder it seems to grow."

With her last word she turned her face towards the house.

And the man who had just owned to a heart so flinty it would "take a hammer and chisel to make any mark upon it," went back to his "Blue-book Parlour," thence into the little locked-up chamber beyond, watered his pot of mignonette, gave an upward sigh to the wisby-washy drawing hanging above it, and then stood for a good three-quarters of an hour staring dreamily out of the window, over the greenslopes and dells, in the direction of Stanham churchyard, where, among the drooping birches and willows, lay a grave that had not been opened for close upon twenty years.

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# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

## CHARLES DICKENS

No. 860. NEW SERIES. SATURDAY, MAY 23, 1885. PRICE TWOPENCE.

### ONLY A BUSINESS MAN.

By MAY DRYDEN.

#### CHAPTER VI.

THE Carfields were rich in relations, though they were rich in nothing else, and amongst these was a young cousin, by name Netta Heard.

Netta was very pretty and rather clever; she had written tolerably musical verses, and had begun to write a novel, and, to use her own words, Netta "adored genius," particularly as personified in her cousin Daniel. Matty was apt to say that her pretty cousin would not adore genius quite so much if she had to darn its socks, put its buttons on, and get its shirts up. But in truth, Netta would have liked nothing better than to wait upon Daniel; she was an only child, and had been so spoiled that she would rather have enjoyed spoiling somebody else for a change.

Daniel was not without attractions for a girl of a romantic turn of mind and a judgment not too discerning. He was undeniably handsome. Netta said that there was a certain weird beauty in his face that reminded her of all sorts of high and noble things.

He certainly had the orthodox appearance of a poet. He was slightly and gracefully built; his black eyes were large and mournful in expression; his face was thin and pale, his hands white, and his fingers long and slender.

Netta lived in Wilton, only a few minutes' walk from the Carfields, and a little visit to her was one of the rare relaxations Phoebe allowed herself. Wilton was a small place and a very pretty one. It consisted of a single street—a portion of the high-road, in fact—that led from Homcester. On either side of this road the houses, or,

rather, cottages, clustered in picturesque groups; they were all white, save where, here and there, a black-and-white building made a specially pretty picture. Such a building there was overlooking the canal, which passed beneath a bridge close to the smithy at the far end of the village. That bridge was a great point of attraction for the village children, who, after racing down the steep hill that led from the ivy-covered school on the church-green to the street, would pause for a moment to peep in at the smithy door, and then stand, with tiny hands grasping the bridge railings, and gaze with delighted eyes at the long strings of narrow, dirty canal-boats that brought the coal from the mines by this branch canal to the main canal below. For Wilton was in the midst of the coal district, though not actually a coal village itself; all around it rose the wheels, and ropes, and other gear that betoken the pit-mouth. All around it, too, were the tall chimneys that disfigure a manufacturing county. In Wilton itself there were no mills, but just beyond the village the road split into two, and though one of these led past the Hall-gates, and the church, and then the Hall itself, and so on through some miles of pretty country, the other came almost immediately to a small foundry, and so on to a large and dirty village, where the great foundry was, and mills, both silk and cotton.

The narrow branch canal was not the only means of carrying coal from the mines north of Wilton to the canal below. A tramway crossed the high-road between Wilton and the railway, and here was another attraction for the children. It was a grand amusement to stand and watch the patient, handsome horses detached from the scarlet waggons, which then, by their own weight, rolled with their black



load down the incline; better still to lay pins on the lines and find them afterwards all flattened out into tiny daggers. Between this tramway and the village was one of the black-and-white buildings before-mentioned—a farmhouse, quaintly pretty, standing by itself. This farmhouse, at the time our story begins, was the focus of all the interest of Wilton's little society, for its old occupant was dead, and, after being empty for a time, it was rumoured that it was again to be occupied, and not by a farmer, but by a gentleman from Homcester, a certain Mr. Fenchurch—no other, in fact, than Mr. Gordon Fenchurch, of the firm of Fenchurch and Sons.

Three years have passed since we met Mr. Gordon Fenchurch last; years that have made very little impression on his outward man. He is still youthful, almost boyish, in appearance, though his eyes are deeply sunk, and rarely now lose the anxious expression of care and thought. No wonder; Gordon Fenchurch has taken the first steps towards becoming a successful man—is a successful man in the eyes of his business acquaintances. Friends he has none to see deeper than the surface. Already the business has grown in his hands, until it is one of the largest of its sort in Homcester; already the subordinates in that business have learned that neither Mr. Staniland nor Mr. Mark is, in reality, at the head of the firm. Staniland and Mark cannot do without Gordon, defer to him in everything, take no steps without consulting him. Gordon, in all those three years, has had no holiday of more than three days' duration, and, spite of Clarence's tender care, is paying the penalty of his ceaseless application, in a nervous system so developed as to be the cause of endless suffering to its owner—suffering which has made it impossible for him to live any longer in the town, and has sent him with his sister Clarence, to be the source of immense interest and curiosity to the worthy inhabitants of Wilton.

The stir made by his arrival might have seemed ridiculous to an outsider, and yet the advent of a stranger was such a rare event as to make the excitement it caused excusable.

It was twelve months since Mr. Fenchurch had first come to Wilton, when he had taken lodgings in the village, and then disappeared again for a few days. During his absence a large case arrived for him, which, by dint of questioning his landlady, his neighbours soon discovered to be full

of books. Upon the strength of this piece of information it was decided that he was a bachelor. The good folk of Wilton did not think much of book-learning. There was not a man among them, except the parson, who ever read anything but his newspaper, and they thought a married man could certainly have no time to devote to the gratification of his intellect.

The next news was that the mysterious stranger had taken the old black-and-white farm, and the business men of the little community told their wives he was a very well-to-do man; and then it was that Wilton began to get excited about Mr. Fenchurch.

Of course he was regarded from many points of view. The young men (there were not many in Wilton) debated anxiously as to whether he would be a pleasant fellow to know. Mothers with marriageable daughters considered the best means of making those daughters acquainted with him; and the young ladies themselves, not altogether free from the prevailing curiosity, speculated as to what sort of a partner he would be at a ball, and whether he was "interesting," a most expressive word in the mouth of a lady.

The new comer and his doings afforded matter for conversation to every class of society in Wilton—from that which boasted in its ranks Mrs. Welsh, the richest and proudest lady of the place, down to that which included her gardener.

A happy man was he who could possess himself of an item of news about Mr. Fenchurch which was not already known to his neighbours. No fragment of information was too small to be talked about. The fact that his great-coat bore the stamp of a London maker gave rise to much speculation. Endless were the conjectures as to what christian-name the initial G. on his portmanteau stood for; and lucky was the porter who carried that same portmanteau from the station to Mr. Fenchurch's lodgings. In the course of the following week he had told every housemaid in the village how the gentleman had walked by his side up the street, asking him concerning Wilton and its ways, and how, when his errand was done, he had given him a shilling. "This very shilling," he would say, triumphantly producing it from his waistcoat-pocket, and then going on to relate that Mr. Fenchurch was "a very civil-spoken, kindly sort o' man, but with a stern way of looking at you, as though he would not stand any nonsense." The

maids repeated all this to their mistresses, who repeated it to each other, every lady unconsciously adding the detail most needed in her eyes to make the story complete.

Mr. Fenchurch's landlady was very popular as long as he remained with her. Mrs. Black, the wife of the grocer who kept his shop in the black-and-white building overlooking the canal, asked her to tea, a great condescension on her part, since Mrs. Jones had been known to eke out her living by taking in washing.

Mrs. Jones was not proud, she was open to any such civility, and muffins and tea were welcome to her, whence-soever they came. But she had nothing more to tell of Mr. Fenchurch than that he was a very quiet gentleman, "sad-like," in fact, who gave her no trouble, save that he came very irregularly to meals.

The post-mistress was besieged with enquiries concerning his letters, but nobly refused to divulge any secrets concerning them, possibly because there were none to divulge.

Meantime the object of all this curiosity went on his way quietly, quite unconscious of the excitement he was causing; and one day, when all his alterations of the farmhouse were completed and he had been living there with his sister some three or four months, he met, on his way from the station, Phoebe Carfield.

Phoebe had felt grateful to Mr. Fenchurch for affording her mother an all-engrossing subject of thought, otherwise she had never thought much about him; and it so happened that, long as he had been in Wilton, she had seldom seen him or his sister. So when she met him in the street, she slackened her pace a little, that she might look at him before he was near enough to see that he was being observed.

"Not handsome," was her mental comment; "but a very, very pleasant face to look at."

He was laden with books—more of them than it was convenient to carry, and just as he approached Phoebe, a man, brushing clumsily against his elbow, scattered them upon the ground.

She was fond of books, could not bear to see them ill-used, and so, obeying her first impulse, stooped to assist in gathering them together. However, it struck her at once that perhaps she was doing what she ought not. She knew it would be quite contrary to her mother's code of social morals that she should have anything to do with a gentleman to whom she had never

been introduced. So she rose with a couple of volumes in her hand, feeling very hot and shy and uncomfortable.

"Thank you, young lady," said a clear kindly voice—a voice remarkably sweet and low for a man, with just a suspicion of a laugh in it which gave her courage to look up to his face and say:

"I beg your pardon, but I really could not bear to see the books upon the ground."

"Then your consideration was for my books and not for me? Allow me to thank you in their name. May I have the pleasure of knowing to whom they are indebted?"

"I am Phoebe Carfield."

"And I am Gordon Fenchurch. You have not been amongst our numerous callers, I think—have you?"

"No; I never pay calls excepting to my cousin. I have no time."

"No time? Why, what can a child like you have to do that you should be short of time?"

His tone and manner were kind enough, but Phoebe's pride was hurt, and she drew her figure up to its full height (not a great one) as she answered gravely:

"I am not a child, Mr. Fenchurch; I am twenty-three. Please take your books; I must go home now. Good-morning."

Mr. Fenchurch raised his hat with an air of the greatest respect, and Phoebe walked sedately homewards, thinking soberly how kindly he had looked at her, and how much she would have liked to know him. She wondered a little whether she really looked so young as to be considered a child, and then whether he had truly thought her so, and then what his sister was like. And then she wished so heartily that she could call on her and see, that she was fain to console herself by reflecting that however nice she might be, she—Phoebe—would never be able to see much of her, and so it was quite as well she should not make her acquaintance.

#### CHAPTER VII.

MR. FENCHURCH, meantime, approached his own house, pausing for a few minutes at the gate and looking towards it—looking, though, as if he hardly saw it, though it made a picture worthy of admiration, with the firelight shining through the red-curtained windows.

He had hardly put his foot inside the porch before the door was opened for him by his sister, who said, as she relieved him of his burden:

"You are late, Gordon. I have been expecting you ten minutes."

"Aye, child," said he; "take care of the books. Treat them with respect; you little know what hands have touched them since you saw them last."

"Why, I suppose Mrs. Jones has handled them; who else?"

"Mrs. Jones is a respectable woman, Clarence, though somewhat grasping, but her hands are large, and bony, and coarse of texture, and the hands I am speaking of were little and plump, and wore pretty grey gloves, a good deal mended though, I think."

"Now, Gordon, you are teasing; tell me what you mean!"

"I have had an adventure, Clarence. Get me my slippers, and I will tell you all about it."

"What bribery! unnecessary bribery, too. They have been at the fire since four o'clock. Tea is ready. Do come in and tell me whom you have seen."

The room into which Clarence drew her brother was, without doubt, the very perfection of a room in which to have tea. There was a good fire blazing in the quaint tiled fireplace, casting an encircling glow on the old oak mantelpiece, and furniture, and bright brasses, with which the room was furnished; the red curtains were drawn, the tea-table was spread with all the elements of a luxurious meal. On the hearth lay an old white dog, who greeted his master's approach with noisy demonstrations of affection.

"Down, Lion—down!" said Gordon. "Clarence, I wonder whatever possessed you to call that dog Lion?"

"I did it because he is not in the least like one; you know I always go by the rule of contraries."

"Aye, that's the reason, I suppose, you stick to me when anyone else would let such a money-grubber turn hermit as well as miser if he were inclined to."

"Don't talk nonsense, Gordon!" said his sister rather anxiously; "I thought you were so jolly when you came in."

"It's too bad, is it not, to bore you with my melancholy and grumbling; you had better do as Everett wants you to, Clarence, and go and live with him and his wife."

"Oh, you've seen Everett to-day, have you? That accounts for your melancholy. Do not be a goose, Gordon. I am very fond of Everett, but I would not live with him for any money, and as for his wife—I hate her!"

"Clarence, for shame!" said her brother, apparently rather startled by the vehemence of her tone. "What has she done to you that you should hate her?"

"Last time I was over at the mills Everett was pressing me to go and live with him, and when I, of course, declined, Mrs. Everett remarked with the sweetest smile, 'Don't press her, my darling love;' you know her way, Gordon, it is always 'darling' and 'dear' with her."

"Yes, I know; what did she say?"

"'Don't press her, my darling love, Clarence knows very well on which side her bread is buttered; she sticks to the money, and she knows very well that the money sticks to Gordon, don't you, dear!'"

"Poor little Clarence!" said Gordon caressingly. She was sitting by him now, and gently stroking one of his thin, nervous hands with hers, as she often did when he came in depressed and worried.

There was a curiously quick sympathy between this brother and sister, so that her mere touch often exercised a healing and soothing influence over him. Often when utterly worn out with sleeplessness and depression of spirits, every other remedy having failed, he would rouse her in the night, and finally fall asleep with her hand on his forehead, or gently stroking back his thin hair.

"Poor little Clarence!" he said now; "you had better leave me, or you will have to share my reputation as a money-grubber. You do not know what hard things they say of me in town, Clary. Look here, a fellow put that in my hand as I was leaving the warehouse to-day."

Clarence took the newspaper-slip he handed her, and read and coloured up in indignation. It was an extract from a sermon of the bishop's on the Pursuit of Riches.

"Cruel!" cried she, crumpling it up and throwing it into the fire; "cruel, and impertinent too. How little people know or understand you!"

"I don't know, my child," answered he despondently; "maybe they know me better than I know myself; indeed, I'm beginning to think they are right and you are wrong, Clarence, in your estimation of my character."

"Gordon," said his sister severely, "you are getting morbid. Come to tea, and tell me whom it was you met to-day. I will not have my curiosity tantalised any longer while you indulge your foolish fancies."

He rose and took his seat at the table opposite to his sister, and made some pretence of eating his tea, saying as he did so :

"I went to-day to my old lodgings to bring away these books, and I suggested to Mrs. Jones that she should put some paper and string around them, but Mrs. Jones, poor woman ! is not gifted with a keen sense of the niceties of life. She said : 'Lor' bless you, sir, you bain't ashamed to carry them that bit of a way, be you ?' So I came away with my precious books all huddled anyhow under my arm."

"And then ?"

"I went to the station, and was coming back, when I saw a neat little figure dressed all in grey coming towards me, and though I must acknowledge that it was rather rude, I looked at the little figure very intently, for I was puzzled to make out whether it was an old woman or a child. She walked sedately enough to be fifty years old ; but when she came nearer I saw a wonderfully fresh, sweet face peeping from under the shabby old grey bonnet. Just as I had noticed that a great, stupid lout of a lad knocked against my elbows ; really these Lancashire lads are very clumsy."

"No treason, Gordon ! What are you but a Lancashire lad yourself ? Not that you are any proof of their not being clumsy."

"Well, he made me drop all my books on the ground, and the next moment my little grey woman was helping me to pick them up, and when I looked up she was standing opposite to me, and blushing violently, as she offered me a couple of volumes."

"What did you say, Gordon ?"

"Asked her what her name was. She said she was Phoebe Carfield. Phoebe is a capital name, just suits my little grey woman."

"And then ?"

"I asked her if she had been to call upon us, and she said she had no time to pay calls. And then I hurt her feelings."

"How ?"

"Called her a child."

"Gordon, you should not. Why will you not remember that you are quite a young man yourself, and not entitled to treat young ladies like children. How old is she ?"

"She says she is twenty-three ; but my own opinion is that she is about ninety-

two, and never was any younger. I believe she is the veritable old woman who lived in a shoe, and that the reason she has no time is that her children are so much trouble to her."

"I believe you are right there. Miss Carfield is one of a family of ten."

"Pray how do you know ?"

"Oh, I know all the affairs of Wilton by this time. There never was such a gossip little place, Gordon. I believe it was Miss Watkins that told me."

"Fat girl with a red face ?" asked Gordon lazily.

"Yes ; the one who has been to call so many times, and who thinks you look so interesting, Gordon. She was here this morning, and almost proposed to stay until you came home—she so dreads my feeling lonely in your absence."

There was a merry twinkle in Clarence's eyes ; but her brother answered her anxiously :

"Are you lonely ? I am afraid it must be very dull for you sometimes."

"Of course I'm not lonely. I don't want anyone but you, Gordon. I have not seen anyone since I came whom I would like to make a friend of. They are all so common here, and so rich, and so persuaded that we are rich. They think of nothing but money, and I hate money, Gordon."

"Poor child ! it has not brought you much pleasure, and there are reasons just now why I must pay more attention to it than ever. But never mind that now. I want you to try and make friends with that quaint little body I met to-day. Will you go and call on her ?"

"Why, Gordon ?"

"She looked so worn-down and old, poor child ! I think from all I hear we might do her some good."

"I thought as much. Gordon, you are, for 'a shrewd man of business,' most absurdly soft-hearted. How many hangers-on have you got already, excluding your own family ?"

"Never mind. Will you call on her ?"

"Her father is that handsome old man we sit next to in church, is he not ?"

"Handsome old humbug !" said her brother irreverently. "Will you call on her, Clarence ?"

"Of course I will if you wish it. Your description has raised a strong desire in me to see Miss Carfield. It is quite contrary to rules, though, you know. We ought to wait for her to call first."

"All the more reason for your doing it

then. There is nothing I object to so much as your silly society rules. What matters who takes the first step towards making an acquaintance, so long as it is taken? Clarence, if I see you turning into a society woman I will disown you."

"No fear," laughed Clarence.

In reality she hated the trammels of society quite as much as did her brother, and had already gained for herself in Wilton a reputation for peculiarity and pride, which it needed all the "interest" inspired by a young, and rich, and remarkably courteous brother to overcome. Gordon's exceeding sensitiveness to the good opinion of others led him to find out in most cases just how people liked to be treated, and to treat them so. Clarence was not so conciliatory; her early experiences had taught her to be suspicious and distrustful. She had never got over the shock which the discovery of Everett's false dealing had been to her. She could, however, be very charming when she chose, and Gordon knew that if she called on Phoebe Carfield she would be very pleasant to her. He dismissed the subject now, saying with a sigh:

"Come, Clarence, let them take these things away. I must get to work."

"What is it to-night, Gordon?"

"A dozen letters to answer, and all these order-sheets to check."

"Which shall I take?"

"You can answer most of the letters for me. Tell Franks and Sons we cannot take their order, we are too full, and write a note to Blastwicks, and say the samples of yarn they spoke of have never arrived."

In five minutes both brother and sister were immersed in business, Clarence writing note after note in a firm, neat hand, of which she was proud, because it enabled her to be her brother's secretary. For a long time the silence was only broken by her voice as she referred some question to her brother, and his, as he answered her curtly.

### THE DOGS OF WAR.

WHEN the sky is overcast, and the horizon veiled in impenetrable mist, the dogs of war are to be dimly seen, as they urge their wild chase with dismal, distant bayings. With us it is the nightly cry of the newspaper-vendors, croaking out like birds of evil omen their news of "terrible slaughter," not always, alas! without foundation; or their dismal voices are heard in the forenoon, when some ill-tidings have

to be told in second editions. And the thrill which their ill-omened bayings send through people at large is a measure of the state of tension in which the general mind is held. For we have come upon strange and stirring times—with great events looming suddenly out of the haze of the future.

Long years have elapsed since such momentous issues have been placed before the country; and never, perhaps, in the memory of living men have such consequences been at stake. When war came upon us before in the shape of the Crimean expedition, it was a war rather of policy than necessity; and with allies and friends on every side, the risks of war were reduced to a minimum. But now the Empire has only its own resources to rely upon. We may have the confidence that nothing can make us rue, if Britain to herself be true; but we may feel assured that all our resources will be strained to the utmost, and that if we fail to win, the loss to ourselves and to our children will be almost irreparable.

It is just the time, then, to look round and judge what the resources of the Empire actually are in reserve of fighting-men, and our chances of success in any great war. If we have to meet in the field any of the great military powers of Europe, we shall meet them under totally changed conditions. We shall have to deal with armed nations, and it strikes us at once that we are as yet far from being an armed nation.

Our navy we naturally regard with pride and confidence; we have the cheerful conviction that, taken all round, it is a match for all the navies of the world; but then ships are but wood—iron, at least—sailors but men; and the conditions of naval warfare are so changed that we know not whether we shall be able to hold the seas as of old and sweep them clear of every hostile sail. And then we cannot hold India with ironclads. There, at our gates, is a colossal military power, happily with some of the weaknesses of its giant growth. That, sooner or later, two powerful empires, meeting in a long career of conquest and annexation—albeit beneficial and justifiable in the interests of humanity on either side—should bring their frontiers into contact without something like a shock of collision, seems improbable, however desirable. If present difficulties are arranged, at any time a collision between a drunken Turcoman and a half-wild Afghan may bring upon us a contest with a nation that can

put a million and a half of soldiers under arms.

The Russian soldier is of excellent war material, stubborn and tenacious, if wanting in quickness and dash. Our own native Indian army is, no doubt, in a fine state of efficiency, but it has never yet met with a European foe, and no security could be felt in the issue without a strong supporting force of British infantry. So that every available soldier at home, and in the colonies, would, undoubtedly, be required for the Indian campaign. To meet the strain, we have, perhaps, a hundred and twenty thousand regular forces at home, and in the colonies, and Egypt; perhaps thirty thousand reserve men as well, now recalled to the colours; with nearly sixty-five thousand regulars at present in India. Our chances of success in such a distant war will depend greatly on the measure and quickness with which we are able to release our regular forces from home-duties, and forward them to the front. Ireland must still require a considerable garrison, for which the militia will, no doubt, be utilised. But the cry will still be for men—more men—men to supply the losses and casualties of war, and feed the fighting-line, which, gallant as it may be, can hardly fail to be thin.

The recruiting-sergeant is abroad, we know, and with the prospect of active service, and the actuality of want of employment and general depression, recruits are coming in fairly well, but if once the dogs of war are let loose, something more must be done to fill up the depleted ranks and keep our colours in advance. And nothing more is really wanted than to popularise the army. We are really a fighting race of much greater military aptitudes than our neighbours generally. It is necessity, which they think a hard one, that makes our young men settle down quietly to the counter, the desk, or the workshop. To be a soldier is the secret desire of most young fellows of health and spirit, and it is chiefly the social disabilities of the private soldier, and the consideration in calmer moments of the want of prospect for future years that deter great numbers from enlisting. But once popularise the army, let it be felt that the profession is one that offers a career, that a fairly educated man can win his way from the goose-step to the command of a division, and there would be nothing more eagerly sought after than admission to the ranks. Our military authorities copy too slavishly

continental models, without making allowance for the radical differences that must exist between the army recruited by a conscription and a thoroughly volunteer army, which ours must necessarily be. The Germans have in their poor and numerous aristocracy a corps of officers ready-made, as it were, and they draw a broad and rigid line between the private and the officer. With us such a line has long been practically effaced. The descendants of the Plantagenets may be found in the ranks, while the son of the successful shoddy-merchant wears the officer's sash. Both are gallant fellows, probably, and have a mutual respect for each other. And there should be nothing in the nature of things to debar the soldier from rising from the bottom of the ladder to the top. Let your recruit have his marshal's staff at the bottom of his knapsack. It costs nothing, but it is worth more to the young fellow of spirit than all the pay and allowances you can give him.

Next to our regular forces, the stress of war must fall upon our militia, of which the full establishment is some hundred and forty-three thousand, while actually about a hundred and twenty thousand may be counted upon to turn out for training. Now, the militia is a force which calls forth mingled feelings in those who regard it. There are regiments as solid and efficient as the line; there are others that remind one of Falstaff's ragged array—in physique, anyhow, if not in clothing and discipline. And yet there is excellent stuff in the militia, and a few months of permanent service would put the most backward regiments on a proper footing. But although the militia shares to some extent in the brisker recruitment caused by the prospect of war, yet the force is still at least twenty thousand short of its full establishment, and it is difficult to see how its ranks are to be replenished without interfering with the recruiting for the regular army, unless the service be made more attractive for the peasantry and agricultural labourers who may be supposed to form its chief strength. The limits of age might be relaxed so as to get hold of any who might want to do a little soldiering, and to whom a few months keep and pay might prove an inducement in hard times. Probably when the militia comes to share the increased consideration and comforts of the regular army, the service may become more popular.

We must not forget that we have nearly twelve thousand yeomanry cavalry, well

horsed, mostly good riders, and of excellent material for irregular horse, who would prove highly valuable in any scheme of home defence. The yeomanry owe little to official encouragement, and are, perhaps, a little too feudal in their composition for general approval; but all that will be forgotten if once the blast of war blows in our ears, and the yeomanry will be found an excellent auxiliary force.

And then we come to the volunteers, equal, and indeed superior in numbers to the whole regular army—two hundred thousand or so of the flower of the nation, armed with an excellent weapon, and knowing how to use it, but at present the mere trunk of any army, without the limbs that would enable it to move, without cavalry, without field artillery, without transport, and with but an imperfect hospital service. The first want, that of cavalry, might, with a little official encouragement, be supplied from the ranks of the volunteers themselves. A mounted service is always popular, and the wealthier members of the corps might be expected to provide their own horses, while other horses might be supplied by sympathisers with the movement from outside. A field artillery would be more difficult to organise, but there is no doubt that such a service would be immensely popular, and we may see in the case of the Honourable Artillery Company and other local corps how smartly volunteer artillery may be served. And a gun on the right spot at the right moment might be the salvation of England, and no one would ask whether it were a volunteer or a regular.

Then, as regards volunteer transport, there would be no lack of that, if only it were organised in advance; and volunteer commanders can do a good deal in the way of preparation on their own account by ascertaining the resources of their respective localities in carts, waggons, and horses. The moment of trial may come upon us like a thief in the night, and things not done will then have to be left undone.

And if we still want more men—if we have sent our militia after our regulars, if our volunteers are holding the garrison-towns, and there are still men wanted, there is a reserve force at hand, which has probably not suggested itself to any official mind, but which is nevertheless existing, and may be drawn upon in time of need. Since the volunteer movement commenced, now more than a quarter of a century ago,

an endless number of men have taken their turn of service, and as the cares and duties of life increased upon them, retired, and made way for younger men. But if once the safety of the country were at stake, these men would cheerfully bear their part, and stand shoulder to shoulder with their younger comrades. The old muster of the countryside when invasion was the cry, was of all who could carry arms, from sixteen to sixty, and the man of middle-age, although he might not be cut out for a campaign in the Soudan, might do yeoman's service in a battle nearer home. Surely it would be advisable to keep together this valuable reservoir of force in definite form by the establishment of a reserve of volunteers, who have completed so many years of service, but who are still ready to come forward in a period of emergency, and would do a few drills every year to keep touch with new methods.

And for the coming time—for the lads of to-day who will be young men to-morrow—surely something more might be done to train them, so that in due course they may take their places in the ranks—volunteers, militia, or regulars—as soldiers half made. Not long since, on the outskirts of a French town, the writer came across a summer evening's drill. The lads of from twelve to sixteen formed one company, the youths from sixteen to eighteen another, and with the handy little chassépôts of the old pattern, they were going through their drill with great glee and satisfaction. With us some little time is given to drill in our board-schools, but in an amateurish way, at odd times, by a master who is perhaps not much of a drill himself. But the Government should supply regular drill-sergeants for all elementary schools; and evening drill in the playgrounds for lads from fourteen to seventeen who have passed their standards and left school, would be both useful and popular.

And then, in cases of sudden need for men, if war should break out unexpectedly in any quarter, what an example was afforded by the raising of Methuen's Horse at the Cape! An office was opened in London, and forthwith, without any effort to make the thing public, there set in a constant stream of volunteers—those fine fellows we saw start the other day, it seems, from Fenchurch Street for the docks—a stream in which there was no stop or break, till the corps was complete, and the doors of the office were promptly closed

against crowds of disappointed applicants. Nor is there any doubt that for special—say Indian—service, the very pick of all the youth of England could be had for a corps d'élite, with good pay and pensions, to serve till the war might be finished.

But one cheering point in the outlook, a bit of blue in the sky for which we ought to be unfeignedly thankful, is the strong national feeling that national danger has elicited from those of our blood and race in all parts of the world. Canada will be with us; in spite of her own special difficulties she will have men to spare for the mother country. We can summon good horsemen and capital rifle-shots from the Cape. Australia will send her sons, and an Australian seems to be just an Englishman, only more so. In fact, the pinch of trial will bring all Britain's sons together, come weal or come woe.

Nor must we forget the swarthy horsemen of India. There are eighteen thousand or so of excellent light horse, and we are told that any number of troopers could be raised among the martial races of the Punjaub, as well as in other parts of India. And the hundred thousand or so of native infantry, brigaded with English troops, may be expected to show the good fighting and marching qualities of the old Sepoy.

Thus, without over-confidence, we may feel that with the whole strength of the Empire brought to bear, we may give a good account of ourselves in the hour of need. With her children gathered about her, Britannia may meet her enemy in the gate and not be put to shame.

### STORYOLOGY.

#### IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

##### WHAT is a myth?

Let us turn up the nearest dictionary, which happens to be Webster, and see what light we get there. A myth, says Webster, is "a fabulous or imaginary statement or narrative, conveying an important truth, generally of a moral or religious nature: an allegory, religious or historical, of spontaneous growth and popular origin, generally involving some supernatural or superhuman claim or power; a tale of some extraordinary personage or country that has been gradually formed by, or has grown out of, the admiration and veneration of successive generations." Here we have a choice of three definitions, but not one of them is by itself satisfying. Let us rather say that a myth is a tradition in narrative

form, more or less current in more or less differing garb, among different races, to which religious or superhuman significations may be ascribable. We say "may be" because although the science of comparative mythology always seeks for such significations, it is probable that the modern interpretations are often as different from the original meaning as certain abstruse "readings" of Shakespeare are from the poet's own thoughts.

In their introduction to *Tales of the Teutonic Lands*, Messrs. Cox and Jones tell us that the whole series of Arthurian legends are pure myths. These tales they say can be "traced back to their earliest forms in phrases which spoke not of men and women, but of the dawn which drives her white herds to their pastures"—the white clouds being the guardians of the cattle of the sun—"of the sun which slays the dew whom he loves, of the fiery dragon which steals the cattle of the lord of light, or the moon which wanders with her myriad children through the heaven." It is claimed that "a strict etymological connection has been established" with regard to a large number of these and similar stories, "but the link which binds the myth of the Hellenic Hephaistos with that of the Vedic Agni justifies the inference that both these myths reappear in those of Regin and of Wayland, or, in other words, that the story of the Dame of the Fine Green Kirtle is the story of Medea, and that the tale of Helen is the Legend of the Loves of Conall Gulban." Elsewhere Cox says that in the myth of Endymion, the sun who has sunk to his dreamless sleep, the moon appears as Asterodia journeying with her fifty daughters through the sky. "In the Christian myth she becomes St. Ursula with her eleven thousand virgins—this Ursula again appearing in the myth of Tannhäuser as the occupant of the Horselberg, and as the fairy queen in the tale of True Thomas of Ercildoune." By the same method of comparative mythology we are driven to place the whole series of the Arthurian stories "in that large family of heroic legends which have their origin in mythical phrases describing the phenomena of the outward world, and more especially those of the day and of the year."

This seems hard, for it compels us to believe that our remote ancestors were very much more intelligent, and imaginative, and poetical, and religious than anything else which they have sent down



to us would have suggested. It is true that Messrs. Cox and Jones do not deny that the names which figure in many of these legends, as in those of Greece, may have been the names of real personages, but yet the narrative, they say, must not be taken as historical. This may be true, but in what sense can we regard it as more probable that the story-makers invented allegories, and clothed them with the names of contemporary or preceding heroes, than that they invented tales of wonder to fit these heroes? Is it easier to believe, for instance, that Arthur came after the myths, and was tacked on to them, than that the myths, or stories, came after Arthur, and were tacked on to him? Is there anything in the story of St. Ursula and her virgins which could not have had natural "spontaneous growth" in an age of deep devotional faith in miracles, that we must be compelled to regard it as purely a mediævalised version of the Greek myth of the Sun and Moon?

We are not writing for scientific readers and scholars, and therefore we do not use the scientific terms and allusions familiar to students of these matters. We are merely writing for ordinary persons, who are often puzzled and pained by the extraordinary meanings which specialists contrive to twist out of simple and familiar things. It is not too much to say that the professional mythologists are among the most troublesome meddlers who disturb the repose of "the average reader." Even Mr. Ruskin suffers in this connection. In *The Queen of the Air* he has given us one of his most delightful books, but there are few, we fancy, outside the circle of philologists and comparative mythologists, who have not thought in reading the lovely interpretations of the myths of Athena, that there was more of Ruskin than the Ancient Greek in the meaning evolved. Somehow, it seems easier to think that these things were conceived by a Professor of Art in the nineteenth century, than that they were the deliberate convictions of a primitive people ever so many centuries before Christ—a people, too, known to be steeped in sensualities, and addicted to very barbarous practices.

Are there, then, reasons for supposing that comparative mythologists are not always right—that, in fact, their science is but a doubtful science after all? We think there are, and we find an ally in Mr. Andrew Lang, who has shown remarkable boldness and skill in his attacks on the

philological method of reading myths. In what follows, we shall avail ourselves largely of Mr. Lang's writings, and especially of those lately collected and published in a volume called *Custom and Myth*.

In the volume just named, Mr. Lang's object is to show the connection between savage customs—or rather the customs of savage and uncivilised races—with ancient myths. But before we reach this branch of Storyology, we must consider the question of the relation between our familiar nursery-tales, the folk-lore of our own and other countries, and old romances, with these same myths. There is something more than monotony in the theory which "resolves most of our old romances into a series of remarks about the weather." The author of *Primitive Culture* (Mr. Tyler) rebels against this theory. There is no legend, no allegory, no nursery-rhyme, he says, safe from it, and, as an amusing illustration, he supposes the *Song of Sixpence* to be thus interpreted by the mythologists. Obviously, the four-and-twenty blackbirds are four-and-twenty hours, and the pie to hold them is the underlying earth covered with the over-arching sky. How true a touch of nature is it "when the pie is opened," that is, when day breaks, "the birds begin to sing." The king is the sun, and his "counting out his money" is pouring out the sunshine, the golden shower of Danaë; the queen is the moon, and her transparent honey the moonlight. The maid is the rosy-fingered dawn, who rises before the sun, her master, and hangs out the clothes (the clouds) across the sky; the particular blackbird who so tragically ends the tale, by "nipping off her nose," is the hour of sunrise. The time-honoured rhyme really wants, as Mr. Tyler remarks, only one thing to prove it a sun-myth, and that one thing is some other proof than a mere argument from analogy.

The same proof is wanting for those who argue that the story of Red Riding Hood is only another dawn-myth. Mr. Hussin holds this view, but we are not aware if he theorises upon the story of the Cat and the Well. Yet is it not capable of the same kind of reading? Pussy is the earth, Tommy, who shoves her into the well, is the evening or twilight, the well is night, Johnny Stout is the Dawn who pulls the earth out of darkness again. There is no limit to this kind of application of so elastic a theory. But the very ease with which such explanations

can be attached to any nursery-rhyme or folk-tale should warn us against their probability. As Mr. Tyler says: "Rash inferences which on the strength of mere resemblances derive episodes of myth from episodes of nature, must be regarded with utter distrust, for the student who has no more stringent criterion than this for his myths of sun, and sky, and dawn, will find them wherever it pleases him to seek them."

The mention of the story of Red Riding Hood suggests that we take as text a familiar folk-tale, upon which that of Red Riding Hood may or may not have been founded, but which certainly forms the base of a good many similar tales, and has been the subject of a good deal of wise exposition by the mythologists. We mean the story of the Wolf and the Seven Little Kids. As told by Grimm, there is a goat who goes out one day leaving her seven little ones safely locked in the house, after warning them to beware of the wolf whom she describes. The wolf comes begging for entrance, pretending to be their mother, but they distrust first his voice and then his black paws. He gets his paws whitened and comes back, showing them against the window as proof that he is indeed their mother. Therefore they open the door, and he swallows six of them, one after the other, without going through the ceremony of mastication. After this he goes back to the wood and falls asleep under a tree, where the disconsolate mother finds him. With the assistance of the seventh and youngest kid, who had escaped by hiding herself in the clock-case, the wolf is cut open, and the six kids jump out all alive and kicking. Stones are then placed in the wolf's stomach, and it is sewed up. When the wolf awakens he cannot account for the jumbling and tumbling in his stomach, so he goes to the well to get a drink. But the weight of the stones makes him top-heavy; he falls in and is drowned.

Now, there is nothing more remarkable in this story than there is in scores of our nursery or household tales, in which not only animals but also inanimate objects are gifted with speech, and in which the love of the marvellous rises superior to natural laws.

According to Cox, we must understand the myth of the wolf and kids thus: "The wolf is here the night, or the darkness, which tries to swallow up the seven days of the week, and actually swallows

six. The seventh—the youngest—escapes by hiding herself in the clock-case; in other words, the week is not quite run out, and before it comes to an end, the mother of the goats unrips the wolf's stomach and places stones in it in place of the little goats, who come trooping out, as the days of the week begin again to run their course."

Very plausible this, from a comparative mythologist's point of view, and not easy to dispute until we find that a similar tale is current all over the world where clock-cases are even yet unknown. We are told that the negroes of Georgia have such a legend; that the natives of Australia have one; that the Zulus have it; the Indians of North America and of British Guiana; and the Malays, all have versions of it. In Brittany it is traceable in the legend of Gargantua; in Germany there are several variations; and in Greece it finds its counterpart in the legend of Saturn or Cronus. The Kaffirs tell the same story of a cannibal, but the way the negroes have it is thus: "Old Mrs. Sow had five little pigs, whom she warned against the machinations of Brer Wolf. Old Mrs. Sow died, and each little pig built a house for himself. The youngest pig built the strongest house. Brer Wolf, by a series of stratagems, entrapped and devoured the four elder pigs. The youngest pig was the wisest, and would not let Brer Wolf come in by the door. He had to enter by way of the chimney, fell into a great fire the youngest pig had lighted, and was burned to death." Here we have no clock-case, and no resurrection of the victims, but otherwise the motif of the story is the same. Certainly the negroes did not receive this tale from the white races, and it seems equally certain that they had no notion of typifying the dawn or the night, or anything else, but only the notion popular among nearly all primitive people that the youngest is usually the most specially gifted and blessed.

As Mr. Lang says: "In the tale of the Wolf and the Seven Kids, the essence is found in the tricks whereby the wolf deceives his victims; in the victory of the goat; in the disgerging of the kids alive; and the punishment of the wolf (as of Cronus in Hesiod) by the stone which he is obliged to admit into his system. In these events there is nothing allegorical or mystical, no reference to sunrise or storms. The crude ideas and incidents are of world-wide range, and suit the fancy of the most

backward nation." The only thing in Grimm's tale which differs materially from those of "world-wide range" is the clock-case—clearly a modern addition, but an item which forms an essential factor in Cox's definition of the "myth."

So much by way of illustration, but, did space permit, dozens might be produced, all pointing the same way. This is to the view that, although stories have unquestionably been transmitted from race to race throughout ages, and so have become widely distributed over the world, all the current nursery, or household, or folk stories have not necessarily been so transmitted from some one creative race of myth-makers. We have seen how an evidently modern interpolation (clock-case) has come to be regarded as an essential part of a myth, and it is easier to believe that the other features are relics of some ancient customs of which we have no record, than that they bear the ingenious references to natural phenomena which the mythologists maintain.

Max Muller holds that all the stories of princesses, imprisoned or enchanted, and delivered by young lovers, "can be traced back to mythological tradition about the spring being released from the bonds of winter." But he requires, first, to have the name of the personages of the story, because he traces the connection more by their etymology than by the incidents of the narrative. Of this we shall have to say something again. With regard to purely nursery or household tales, the question seems to resolve itself pretty much into this: Are they the remains of an older and higher mythology, or are they the foundations upon which the priests, and medicine-men, and minstrels of later ages built their myths? Are they, in short, surviving relics, or were they germs? The favourite scientific theory adopts the former view; we incline to the latter. There are many of the familiar folk-tales which it is impossible to explain, and there are many, doubtless, which are in some sort fragments of the old mythologies filtered to us through Greece. But, on the whole, it is more reasonable to conclude that the simple stories of the marvellous or irrational have their origin "in the qualities of the uncivilised imagination."

Thus, with regard to the current superstitions of our peasantry and of the Highlanders, it is much more rational to consider them, as Dr. Robert Chambers did, as "springing from a disposition of the human mind to account for actual

appearances by some imagined history which the appearances suggest," than as relics of the old-world mythologies. The untutored mind disregards the natural even in these days of applied sciences. There is an old weir across the Tweed which the common people, forgetting the mill, which had disappeared, pointed out as the work of one of the imps of Michael Scott, the wizard. Wherever there are three-topped hills there is sure to be a legend of the work of this same Michael or some other wizard. In the same way, deep, clear lakes exist in various parts of the country, concerning which traditions survive of cities lying at the bottom, submerged for their wickedness, or by the machinations of some evil spirit. Old buildings exist in many parts in such unfavourable situations that popular tradition can only account for the singularity by the operation of some unfriendly spirit transporting them from their original locality. Large solitary rocks off the coast, or on hilltops, have been deposited there by witches. Water springing from a rock by the roadside has always been the result of the stroke of some magician or saint. Large depressions on hillsides are generally the footprints of giants, like the mark left by Buddha's foot as he ascended to heaven, which is still to be seen on a hill in Ceylon. The circular marks in the fields are the rings drawn by the fairies for their midnight dances, and a scaur or cliff bearing the marks of volcanic action or of lightning is invariably associated with some tale of diabolic action. Almost every reader can add instances of natural appearances or effects idealised by the workings of the imagination of uncivilised or uncultivated minds.

## A GROUP OF IMMORTALS.

### A STORY IN SEVEN CHAPTERS.

#### CHAPTER I. THE TABLEAU.

TWENTY years ago I happened to be spending what I chose to call a holiday at an attractive English watering-place I need not name. The only excuse I can make for my laziness is the fact that I never undertook to do anything without discovering that others could do it much better. And I had just enough to live upon. Why do misguided relations ever leave a young fellow just enough to live upon? Better knock him on the head at once, and have done with it.

At this stage of what, for want of a better word, I must nevertheless call my career, I

was verging on thirty, but as far as I can remember, hardly younger in feeling and views of life generally than I am now. I took, I confess it, somewhat airy, I might almost say contemptuous views of fireside existence at that time. I had not the remotest conception of what falling in love could mean, and I prided myself upon a fancied superiority to other men in the matter of sentiment. I had made up my mind long ago that my destiny—if, indeed, I was to have a destiny—would not wear the guise of a woman's smile. Nevertheless, no one more enjoyed the society of a sparkling, beautiful girl than myself, and no one was at more pains to please the sex I affected to despise.

I am, if not wiser, at least more humble-minded than I was then, and if I have never lost my dilettante, vagrant habits—the habits of an amateur in art and many other things besides, at least I recognise now the more serious aspect of life that must be confronted steadily by those who would fain live indeed.

At this juncture in my affairs, then, the following romantic incident happened to me.

I was staying, as I have just before mentioned, at a seductive spot on the south-coast, and, as I rode leisurely along a pretty road that wound upwards from the town into the bright green country, my eyes were riveted by an engaging family-group in a garden close by. Garden, did I say? I should rather apply the word pleasure-ground to the vast enclosure before me; with its undulating swards and flower-beds, alleys, and winding walks extending over several acres, all in perfect order, and in the full glory of midsummer. The wall was so low, and the ascent of the road so steep that I commanded the entire scene, although my glance was immediately fascinated by the group in the foreground. The little picture was simply perfection. Crawling along at a snail's pace, I gazed my fill. Just at this bend of the road, the garden sloped upwards to a fair and conspicuous terrace in front of the mansion, and here were four figures so harmoniously and exquisitely grouped, that they looked more as if they belonged to a picture or graceful drama than to real life.

On the velvety stretch of turf in front of the handsome stone terrace, a girl and youth, evidently brother and sister, were playing battledore and shuttlecock. Never dainty game more daintily played! As long as I live those figures will live in my

mind too—immortal by reason of naïve graces, youthfulness, and beauty.

The girl was one of those delicate, slender types, for which we are more accustomed to look among American beauties than our own more robust Saxons, every line, every curve of that fair face and perfect figure being purely cut. Or perhaps there was Parisian ancestry here, since in the Parisienne of pure race you find just the same consummate finish, if I may so express myself, of feature and limb, combined with a vivacity and grace as little to be described as they are to be imitated. Her dress was white, as befitted the season, and about her dress, too, so simple, so perfect, something reminded you of the Frenchwoman. Ornaments she wore none, except a crimson flower-head carelessly fastened to the bosom of the dress, and something gold that glittered at her throat. Her beautiful hair was worn so as to display its abundance to perfection; more, indeed, in the style of the great ladies of the olden time than now, when many women might, for all we know, be close shorn as nuns and Jewish matrons for all they show of their tresses.

This dainty apparition had a not unworthy counterpart in the youthful Antinous, her brother. He was a handsome, beardless stripling, about eighteen, and well did the easy undress permissible in out-of-door sports become him. He wore, indeed, a kind of cricketing costume of sky-blue flannel, no better set-off imaginable for a youth with auburn curls, violet eyes, and the pink-and-white complexion of a girl. There was the promise, however, of a stalwart man about him, and his looks were hardly less ingratiating than those of his sister. How beautifully they played their game! How deliciously she scolded and made fun of him! How musical the sound of their mingled laughter! Their names, too, caught my enraptured ear, and they also seemed enchanting.

"Lionelle, Lionelle!" Lionelle this, Lionelle that. I heard the pretty half English, half French name a dozen times from the youth's lips, whilst in silvery accents that haunt me still, the maiden made me equally familiar with her brother's.

"Julian, Julian!" she cried again and again as she chided him for his careless play. Lionelle — Julian — rare names, euphonious names! Surely the parentage of this uncommon pair must be wholly

out of the ordinary way. Glancing towards the terrace I now saw that the two figures seated on the rustic bench in no degree resembled the stereotyped nineteenth century papa and mamma.

The man was evidently one of those much-travelled, accommodating, cosmopolitan English gentlemen, who have long ago ceased to plume themselves upon their nationality. His dress, his looks, proclaimed the citizen of the world; his speech also; for as I slowly crawled the hillside along, I heard him address the young couple on the lawn in the purest English, just flavoured with French. A sweet Italian word, too, came in most appropriately, yet unawares. There are certain foreign expressions for which we have no precise equivalent, and we, who have broken bread half a lifetime with foreigners, cannot resist the contagion of words.

The head of my unknown family was a man still in his prime. The handsome face was not without lines of care, but the pleasant smile, the cheery voice, the faultless although careless dress betokened easy circumstances. He held in his hand a newspaper, but let it fall on his knees while he watched the game.

"Those children of yours—those children of yours, mamma! Look at them," he said laughingly; "they have been playing for an hour and quarrelling all the time."

"They want someone else to play with. That is all," replied the lady seated beside him. "What can young people do but quarrel—or make love?"

I glanced at the speaker with an interest that suddenly deepened. She had been in her youth a strikingly handsome—nay, a sumptuous woman—a woman, moreover, accustomed to a certain kind of state. The costly Indian shawl thrown round her shoulders, the beautiful bit of lace forming her headdress, the aigrette in old Auvergnat jewellery fastening her collar; even the old-fashioned bluish-white silk stocking, and slippers adorned with paste-buckles in monogram, betokened circumstances that once, at least, had been out of the common way. No mere humdrum matron would possess such ornaments as these, or wear them every day. Lines of care were written on this face, too, as well as on that of her companion. She might, perhaps, have been older than her husband, and in her case also, age was softened and beautified, not only by uncommon fastidiousness in dress, but by a look of urbanity quite as rare.

The group was altogether so charming, and the background of June flowers and foliage so becoming, that I reluctantly lost sight of it by the bending of the road. What was my surprise and delight when I came to the side-entrance of the mansion, to find in the porch a handsome lamp, bearing this inscription: "Hydropathic Establishment!"

The outer doors were flung invitingly open; the spacious entrance-hall, brightened with tropic plants, enticed the passer-by. I was free to follow the caprice of the moment, so I straightway alighted, flung the reins on my horse's head, and rang the bell.

#### CHAPTER II. AMARANTH.

NEVER was fairyland more accessible. The vast congeries of buildings, with its pleasure-ground, was only just opened as a hydropathic establishment. I was as yet the only visitor besides the family group on the lawn. A dozen chambers were submitted to my choice. Everything I asked for was promised without demur. If any place in the world could spoil a grown-up human child, it promised to be this.

A sojourn of this kind suited my tastes very well. In these charming make-believes, something between a country house, an hotel, and a cosy family circle, a bachelor may take his fill of flirtation and fare none the worse. He may for the nonce hang up his hat and feel at home, and is free to-morrow to break this flowery chain if domesticities weary—if he lose his heart, is sure to find it next day.

And there were other reasons for testing the merits of a new hydropathic establishment so conveniently placed. How pleasant to be able to recommend a summer holiday resort to my tired American friends, and other wandering acquaintance in search of repose after long spells of travel! Not only inclination, therefore, but duty made me ring the bell.

"What a sweet spot! What delightful hosts! But the place wants peopling. It needs life, intrigue, romance!"

I had engaged my room, paid my bill at the hotel, fetched my portmanteau from the town, and there I was, seated by Lionelle's father on the terrace, already a member of the irresistible family group which had fascinated me an hour or two before.

I answered my agreeable interlocutor absently, for just then the graceful figure of Lionelle appeared at the bay-window. It seemed to me that all the romance the world could boast was there.

She had dressed for dinner—in other words, exchanged one beautiful white gown for another. This time she wore no artless cambric, such as schoolgirls wear on prize-days, but a close-fitting, elaborate dress of rich white satin, its whiteness not of snow, rather of the lily, its texture of the softest imaginable. I noticed that she still wore a splendid flower-head of deep crimson flower of amaranth on her bosom, and the ornaments—in old-gold and enamel around her slender throat and wrists—showed the same quaint device of a serpent with its tail in its mouth.

"My daughter Lionelle—our new fellow-guest, Mr. Gerald Archer," said my companion by way of introduction—himself he had already introduced.

She descended the steps airily, and, having inclined her head to me with a friendly smile, bent low and kissed her father on the forehead. Holding one of his hands in her own, she sat down beside him.

"My Lionelle," Mr. Bolingbroke began, looking at her fondly and admiringly, "persuade Mr. Archer to entice his sister here if he have one. We want, as I have just observed to our guest-friend, more human intercourse, more of a little world in this big house and solitary pleasure."

"Alas! I have no sister," I made reply.

"And if you had," Lionelle answered, "before she got here, the spell might be broken, the world might have invaded us; but why desire it? You speak of the world, papa, as if it were otherwise than hateful."

"You are young—in the age of dreams; you need no little distractions, no chit-chat, no gossip, no adventures," Mr. Bolingbroke said. "We older folks, having played out the game of life ourselves, like to watch others staking their throws."

"Then, papa," Lionelle made answer, a smile following the shade that had passed over her exquisitely outlined, sensitive face, "wish again, and again, and again; you sighed at breakfast, 'If only someone would come.' Already the wished-for someone is here!"

"This daughter of mine cannot understand me," Mr. Bolingbroke said, after having smilingly shaken his head at her. "My career, Mr. Archer, has not always been the smooth running on wheels that it is now. Like other men, I have had to contend with—well, with antagonisms of various kinds. Is it not natural that, when I have nothing to do but sit and bask in the sun, I should relish a little amuse-

ment? And what so amusing as human nature?"

"I should have said, what so dull?—with exceptions," I replied laughingly.

At that moment Mrs. Bolingbroke appeared, having one hand in Julian's arm. The same little ceremony gone through, and we were all the best friends in the world.

"Being the first comers, you will permit us to welcome you," said the lady, pressing my hand with a look of almost maternal interest. "It is pleasant, too, to find others possessed of as much confidence and hopefulness as ourselves. This place was only opened last week."

"We have a passion for new places and new physiognomies," put in Julian.

"That is not quite the way to put it, dearest boy," Mrs. Bolingbroke said. "We are not rich enough to set up housekeeping in this ruinous England, Mr. Archer, and we cannot do without society and an agreeable mode of living."

It was impossible to be stiff under such circumstances, and before dinner was half over we had become as genial as if our acquaintance had been of long standing. There are certain much-travelled English folks possessed of a charming adaptability of character, acquired, rather than inherent, it may be, yet most agreeable, nevertheless, and strikingly in contrast with the demeanour of insulars generally. This unique family combined French amenity and sparkle, with native staidness and reserve. I could not put any question, and no one volunteered to enlighten me on the subject of family history. But I felt little doubt that a French element had come into play. All four spoke correct English, yet I was ready to swear that either Mr. or Mrs. Bolingbroke, or both, were of French extraction. Esprit and gaiety were there in abundance. I never remember having taken part in a merrier little banquet. Yet the cloud of care that occasionally passed over the faces of both husband and wife made me understand why the company of a stranger should be so welcome. Some affliction, some anxiety, made long-continued solitude unendurable. There was a shadow that even the bright presence of Lionelle and Julian could not dispel.

The dinner was very good, and prettily served.

"But we should fare twice as well did we number fifty," grumbled poor Mr. Bolingbroke, with the sigh of the gastronome, as he glanced at the bill of fare. "Lionelle,

love, do think of it and write to-morrow to Mrs. Arbuthnot and persuade her to come here. And those nice Lavenhams we met at Nice! Make them join us. Let us get together a perfect little party."

According to my own notion, the party was perfect already, but I felt obliged to say that I, in my turn, would recommend the place.

"A good hand at chess, a whist-player, Mr. Archer—eh?" Mr. Bolingbroke added insinuatingly. "Find me one of these, and I shall be perpetually grateful to you."

When we went to the drawing-room, a dozen agreeable alternatives, without being proposed, suggested themselves to me. Alike billiards, cigars, chess, light literature, and the piano invited.

There was no officious amiability, no invitation to amuse myself in any especial line. The Bolingbrokes were not only the most delightful people in the world, but exceptionally well versed in human nature. Instead of making diversion hateful by choosing for me, all went their own way.

Mr. Bolingbroke took up an evening paper in the drawing-room. The brother and sister trifled with the billiard-balls. I strolled into the shrubbery and smoked my cigar alone, and neither the young man nor the elder intruded on my solitude whilst it lasted. It was one of those almost phenomenal June evenings in England, when rose-scents, wafted through open casements, and jasmine alleys lighted up by the glow-worm, have almost southern deliciousness.

Soon the sounds of a waltz—softly rather than brilliantly played—reached me from the terrace. Some happy inspiration had led Mrs. Bolingbroke to the piano, and there—no dancers ever more beautifully matched—whirled Lionelle and her brother on the sward, set round with white standard roses. I was no passionate dancer myself, and perhaps I had hardly danced at a dozen balls in my life, but I did long to be in Julian's place now. Not that I could hope to equal the performance of Lionelle's partner. The waltzing of both was so finished, yet so easy, that I had never seen anything at all like it, except, indeed, at the opera. And the two harmonised so well together—the sister's lissome form, the brother's tall, symmetrical figure—altogether it was quite a spectacle. The thought occurred to me as I watched them, that those who would waltz well should never waltz except with their brothers and sisters, in order to have no romance about the occasion, and to be able to throw heart

and soul into their performance, and make it a work of art.

The dance over, Julian came up to me, laughingly fanning himself with his mother's fan, an exquisite little Louis Seize.

"My sister and I find waltzing dull work. We cannot get up a quarrel over it, do what we will," he said; "whereas I am as much ahead of her at lawn-tennis, as she is of me at battledore and shuttlecock. It is a perpetual wrangle then."

"I am a poor dancer—that is to say by comparison. Will Miss Bolingbroke, nevertheless, waltz with me, do you think?" I replied.

How could any girl under the circumstances refuse? I waltzed, once, twice, three times with Lionelle, and she certainly did not compliment me on my skill. The piquant part of the dance, indeed, lay in her openly expressed dissatisfaction with myself. Apparently quite indifferent to my admiration of her own dancing, she forthwith set herself to improve mine, as if the waltz were an all-important part of human life. There was, moreover, in every word, look, and action, as far as I was concerned, a self-abnegation—an impersonality that puzzled me greatly. Why such keen interest in a stranger, unless the lovely Lionelle, like every other ninety-ninth daughter of Eve out of a hundred, was a consummate coquette?

But this curious contradiction—on the one hand, alertness to be kind, sisterly, serviceable; on the other, reluctance to be feminine, freakish, bewitching—made her, in my eyes, a thousand times more adorable. Sportive she was enough, now singing snatches of French or Italian song, now ecstatically placing a glow-worm in the heart of a white rose and contemplating it, now trying to imitate the notes of a nightingale in the copse hard-by; and in all that she did was a seeking after effects that I set down to a nature artistically endowed and cultivated beyond most. She did not seem content to realise the sensuous beauty around her, but must ever look for ulterior results, ever be throwing herself into the imagination of others. The lazy, languid talk of two, so called forth, as I deemed, by the circumstances, was evidently not to her taste. What so easy as to get up a little playful sentiment amid these starlit rose-alleys, within sight and sound of a placid, rippling sea?

I could not suppose that coquetry was foreign to her nature, and the thought that her heart already belonged to another

was not to be entertained for a moment. I set down, therefore, the unusual indifference of her behaviour, for I knew not by what other name to call it, to seriousness of character. This singular girl, without being, as far as I could discover, in the least learned or serious, was yet given to pondering on the subtler aspects of nature and life. It might be also that untoward family circumstances had sobered her temperament in early youth.

"Flower of amaranth, serpent self-entwined," I cried, picking up the flower and the bracelet she had let fall in our dancing-lesson. "Why these emblems of immortality, Miss Bolingbroke? Are you, then, exempt from the ordinary lot of humanity? Can you, then, afford to laugh at Time himself's furlowing care, both so portentous to the rest of us?"

I spoke jestingly, as I proffered the rich crimson blossom, and begged permission to adjust the blacelet.

Evidently gratified at having mystified me, and accepting my imputation as sweetest flattery, she answered in low, insinuating, suggestive tones:

"And why not? Though do not make light of the happiest, the saddest dower that can befall a human being! The dower of those who can never die!"

I was about to ask the meaning of such Sphinx-like response, when the silvery, anxious voice of Mrs. Bolingbroke sounded from within.

"Lionelle, my child, the night grows chilly. Come in, I implore you!"

#### CHAPTER III. "I CANNOT DIE."

THE MRS. ARBUTHNOT spoken of did not come, nor the Lavenhams either, but before a week was out, we numbered a large company, partly, I feel bound to admit, owing to my own officiousness.

Truth to tell, poor Mr. Bolingbroke grew so pensive for want of a little society, and talked so incessantly of carrying Lionelle away, that I grew desperate. I wrote to this friend and that, extolling the delightfulness of the place; I even went so far as to invite a former tutor—a curate with seven children—for a few days. The poor fellow needed rest, and loved chess and croquet to distraction.

It was the very thing for him, and Mr. Bolingbroke rubbed his hands in high spirits.

"A cassock, a clerical grace before meat, a black coat and white stock on the lawn! My dear sir," he said, turning to the pro-

prietor of the new hydropathic establishment, "from the day that a clergyman clears his throat at your dinner-table, the fortunes of this house are made!"

True enough. No sooner was the Rev. Archibald Craken's name published in the visitors'-list, than public confidence strengthened wonderfully. A stranger from some remote planet must have supposed the mild-looking Mr. Craken to be a talismanic presence warding off all evils flesh is heir to.

Not a day now but brought its contingent of valetudinarians.

First came a pretty American matron with a bevy of equally pretty daughters and nieces, needing rest after the tour of Europe. In their wake followed two handsome, pure-blooded young Hindoos, students in law, anxious to see a little more of English life and manners before returning to their own country. Then we had, of course, two or three elderly bachelors of both sexes, who wanted someone to chat with—one of the paramount needs of human existence—and, lastly, I mention a pair of acquaintances of my own—a cheery married couple, with hardly a more serious avocation in life than to make themselves agreeable, and who had come simply because I asked them.

Within a week, therefore, our numbers had quadrupled, to the intense satisfaction of all concerned except myself. There are manifold reasons why the members of an artificially composed family should thus rejoice at any addition. To the materialist a well-patronised hotel means a good dinner. To the whimsical, the possibility of a sympathetic ear. The story-teller is sure of an audience, the dawdler of finding his fellow, the male coquette of at least a pair of bright eyes, and the bored hopes against hope that at last some remedy shall turn up for his boredom.

But my own case was wholly different. I did not care a straw about the bills of fare Mr. Bolingbroke studied with such minute care from day to day. Lazy as I was, I hated alike telling stories or having to listen to them. I needed not the society of other good-for-nothings like myself to get through the day. And I had never gone a step out of my way for a pair of beautiful eyes till I gazed for the first time on Lionelle's.

Lionelle—Lionelle! The very name haunted me from morning till night, as if it belonged to some being inhabiting a world of phantasy and dreams, whilst



Lionelle herself seemed to recede farther and farther from the life of every day, in so far as it concerned myself. I could not blame the girl's conduct in the least thing. It was not her fault that during those first days after my arrival we were thrown a good deal together, and that such a condition of things could not continue.

Without putting herself at all forward, Lionelle was now the very life and soul of the little society, and she bore her popularity with a suavity and naturalness that must have disarmed envy, if, indeed, any feminine detractors had found their way into our Arcadia by the sea. But as yet we were the most good-natured set of people that chance could well have assembled together.

The astounding part of it all was that, whilst as much of a favourite with her own sex as with mine, she received the homage of both almost indifferently. Kind, warm-hearted, even to affectionateness, sympathetic to a marvellous degree, she yet gave the impression of being cut off by some strange fate from the ordinary lot of mortals. With all her confidingness and power of eliciting response, she remained in a certain sense aloof from every one of us. Even her gaiety, to my thinking, had a touch of unreality and hollowness about it.

No one seemed to notice this except myself; perhaps because no one else studied her so closely and with such growing interest.

My friend's wife, Etta Molyneux, once said to her husband carelessly, in my hearing:

"That pretty Lionelle! Do you know, Edmund, I feel confident she has been desperately in love, and has lost her lover. Was ever flirtation so perfect and so finished as hers? No girl with a heart to lose could flirt in that manner. Or perhaps the poor child is consumptive, and feels intuitively that she cannot live long."

These disconcerting suggestions made me watch Lionelle more narrowly than ever, but I could never discover the slightest foundation for either. I never caught her in a dreamy, despondent mood—the mood of a girl who fancies she has nothing to live for. Still less could I discern any sign of that dread disease which is as a Moloch devouring maidens. No excitement brought a hectic flush to that softly-outlined cheek. Airy, sprite-like, dainty creature that she was, she yet broke her fast heartily with the rest of us. And when our fellowship

numbered half-a-dozen children, she would run races with the fleetest of them.

Those terrible children! I positively hated the place as soon as it became invaded by a host of turbulent youngsters. Lionelle was the most wonderful child-charmer I ever knew. No wonder that I now felt ready to die of envy. She did not neglect any of us, delighting the Hindoo brothers still with an occasional tête-à-tête in French, waltzing with me at night amid the glow-worms and the white roses, playing and singing to the elderly folks in the drawing-room, getting up little excursions with the Americans and the curates, of whom we now numbered five. In fact, she was as much the life of the party as ever. But, above all, she devoted herself to the children, and, of course, the happier she made them, the faster they came.

And again Mr. Bolingbroke rubbed his hands.

"A little heaven upon earth—eh, Mr. Archer? What place is like home without children? Rosy, cherubic faces, little pattering footsteps, innocent prattle; who can live a really human life without such sweet influences?"

I must say that the poor gentleman looked a little overdone with the noise and bustle at times, and seemed to get out of the way of the cherubic faces and pattering feet whenever he decently could. As to Julian, his amiability even exceeded his sister's. Lazy and purposeless although he appeared to be, he had the happiest knack in the world of being busily idle. From morning till night he did absolutely nothing, and, nevertheless, I would almost as soon have been at the treadmill. The poor young fellow, simply because he was good-natured and versatile, became at everybody's beck and call. I have seen him drop into a garden-chair and steal five minutes' sleep in the middle of the day, utterly worn out by interminable croquet, lawn-tennis, or hide-and-seek. It was Mr. Julian this, Mr. Julian that, all day long.

"What would you have?" he used to say to me in his easy, elegant French, when I expressed my astonishment at such powers of endurance. "Like father, like son. My father, as you see, is an incorrigible idler. He has brought me up to his favourite profession—that is all."

"An amiable one, on my word," I made reply. "Heaven help the dull were it not for the more lightsome spirits that condescend to consort with them!"

I could get nothing more definite out of the handsome, accomplished Julian, and whenever I tried to draw Lionelle into a personal talk, she was even more vague and discursive than her brother.

The vagueness about everything connected with this strange family struck me more, if possible, than their versatility and unexampled sociableness. They seemed to have no past, much less did they appear to have a future.

One day I said, in the midst of a flirtation more serious than usual :

"Where shall I find you next year, when I make ready to set out on the search?"

She made sportive evasion :

"As if life could be resolved into a when and a where! And do not human beings change! Would the Lionelle you find next year be the Lionelle you know now?"

"You are no feminine Proteus, anyhow; you cannot wholly change yourself outwardly," I said.

"Discover that, if you can and will," was the Sphinx-like answer, with a charming smile.

"But, at least, give me a clue," I entreated. "You say you are all wanderers—here to-day, gone to-morrow; as much at home at Chicago as in the Champs Elysées; you gather violets one Christmas Day in Algeria, and another finds you sledging towards your plum-pudding at Quebec. For Heaven's sake, then, at least incline your head towards one point of the compass—east, west, north, south—all the same to me; I follow you."

She laughed, slightly scornful.

"How easy thus to traverse the globe in imagination! But even the crossing of the Channel, the getting from London to Paris—who ever did as much as that from mere sentiment?"

"Scores of lovers as desperate as myself, I will answer for it," I said boldly.

"Find me one," laughed Lionelle. Then, as if feeling bound to apologise for the turn she had involuntarily given to the conversation, she added, in the directest manner: "You forget that I am not my own mistress. Who can answer for such wanderers as my parents?"

"They cannot fetter your will," I retorted.

The more sybilline this strange girl became, the more she fascinated me.

She replied in a voice as full of mystery as ever, whilst for a moment she fixed her eyes on mine with a penetrating glance.

They were deep, clear violet eyes, full of feminine witchery, despite the unreadableness she contrived to put into them.

"Had I a will," she whispered, "should I not choose to love, wed, grow old, and die, like any other maiden?"

Thus was ever the case when we seemed on the brink of closest confidence. She broke away from me under some pretence or other, and could not be brought to resume the thread of our discourse.

## LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNNIE," ETC., ETC.

### CHAPTER LV.

A GREY-BLUE stretch of evening sky, a grey-blue stretch of sea beneath, still as any forest pond on a windless summer's day; here and there small boats, rowed by lazy-limbed oarsmen, dot the waves. In the near distance rides at anchor a large sharply-built schooner, with white furled sails, from whose masthead floats a broad pennon, which now, in the slanting sunlight, flashes into a bright turquoise-blue, and anon fades into a depth of colour akin to black.

This schooner has been the subject of much talk and comment among the gay, fashionable crowd that has thronged Cowes during the regatta week. Everyone was loud in the praise of its perfect build and superb appointments. Yet, withal, its superbness was not the sort of thing in which the millionaire yacht-builder loves to run riot. Gilding, plush, mirrors, and such like bravery were only conspicuous by their absence. The inner decoration of the beautiful boat might have been that of some ancient classic temple for the unostentatious perfection with which every detail, small or great, had been carried out. Rouen blue, varying from the pale turquoise tint to an azure black, was the only colour permitted for the heavy drapery of the curtains and thick carpets; oak of the darkest possible shade, the only wood visible; bronze, artistically wrought and deep in colour, the only metal.

The figure-head of the schooner even—a winged sphinx—was cast in this metal, and round its waist, in place of girdle, ran the Shakespearian legend: "The rest is silence."

This legend was written in letters of a dull gold, and was the only bit of gilding the ship owned to from helm to prow.

During the regatta week the Sphinx had

been a delightful topic for admiration and conjecture. Everyone found time to row out and inspect her, to return and to criticise her. Not a few were the questions asked as to her destination, a point, nevertheless, upon which everyone seemed unable to satisfy everyone else, for the simple reason that to all questioners Miss Yorke had replied in her sweetest manner :

"Really she had not quite made up her mind where she was going yet. It might be only for a little trip to Italy, or it might be to Algiers, or to Australia even, to see her mother and sister."

But all this is now a thing of the past. The regatta is over and done with, the gay crowd is once more en route for other meeting-places, and in lieu of the hundred and one field-glasses which were wont to be levelled at the Sphinx from the parade and pier, there is but one now—that of Ellinor Yorke, as she stands in the stone balcony of the house Uncle Hugh has hired for a few weeks.

This house is a somewhat pretentious one in appearance. It stands high above the cliffs in its own grounds, and some little distance back from the parade and more public thoroughfares. From its front windows it commands a magnificent view of the Solent as it widens into the open sea.

The sun has just set ; a golden light lingers yet along the coast-line, and ripples on the waters. Hurst Castle stands out, the black grim pile that it is ; a huge cloud overhangs the west, still—

Full-fledged with plumes of tawny fire and hoar grey light.

Against this the delicate tracery of the Sphinx, her masts, her rigging, pennon, and sails, stands sharply defined.

"I must have an eye for beauty," Miss Yorke says, laying down her glass and looking towards the window of the room outside which she is standing ; "though I look, and look, and look at the Sphinx from morning till night, I never cease admiring her."

There is a something in her voice, in her accent of hidden sarcasm, difficult to define. One could fancy a runaway gunner, caught and condemned to be shot, looking at the muzzles of the rifles directed towards him, and saying in much such a tone, "Come, now, I'm glad you've chosen the latest sweet thing in breechloaders to do your work."

A man's voice within the room answers Ellinor's remark.

"Why do you look, and look in that

way ?" it says sharply, peremptorily—it is difficult to recognise the tones of Phil Wickham's baritone in it. "Give me that glass ; it's of no possible use to you."

"I'll give it you when I've done with it—in about a month's time," is Ellinor's reply. Then once more she lifts her glass and directs it seawards.

Phil steps out into the balcony and lays his hand upon her arm.

"Come in at once," he says, again peremptorily. "Don't you see the sun has set ? The dew will soon be falling. You'll get a chill."

"Ah, that might be bad," replies Ellinor precisely in the tone she had used first.

Then she lets Phil take her glass away and draw her towards the window.

The window is shadowed by two big pink-flowered oleanders in tubs. Ellinor stops in front of them and begins plucking the leaves.

"One, two, three, four, five, six," she begins counting.

"What are you doing ?" asks Phil, a grim suspicion of her meaning flashing into his mind.

Ellinor pauses in her counting a moment.

"By the way," she says, "I had forgotten I had something to tell you. I heard from a friend of yours yesterday—Lucy Selwyn."

"From Lucy Selwyn !"

"Yes ; a sweet little note it was. If ever a girl deserves to be canonised as a saint it is she ! (Seven, eight, nine, ten.) She prays for me night and day. Fancy that ! Has forgiven me a thousand times over ; but she adds in a little sort of postscript (and that is by far the most human and natural part of the whole letter) she never wishes in this life to look upon my face again. Not to be wondered at, is it ?"

Phil does not answer.

"Eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen," she goes on. "I wrote to her in reply this morning—that is to say, I answered her postscript, nothing more. I told her I hoped she would always keep in the same frame of mind, and to help preserve it to her I sent back those two fragments of her dead Rodney's letters (his to me and mine to him, I mean) ; I told her they would be more suggestive to her than ever they could be to me."

But still Phil remains silent.

At one time he had had a keen appreciation for sarcasm. Somehow, it has lost its flavour for him now.

Ellinor looks up at him for a reply; getting none, she goes on plucking her leaves and counting them:

"Eighteen, nineteen, twenty."

On a sudden, Phil finds his voice.

"What are you gathering them for?" he again queries, sharply yet nervously.

"Don't you know what children do when their holidays are getting to an end—gather a bundle of leaves and throw away one daily; it makes them appreciate the days more when they see how few remain. Now how many shall I gather?"

"Great Heavens! you'll drive me mad! Am I altogether made of cast iron?" exclaims Phil, struggling hard to keep his composure.

Ellinor goes on with her counting.

"Here are twenty-four, shall I make it twenty-five and throw one away for to-day—or shall we say thirty? Yes, thirty, I think. That will be twenty-nine days from to-day, and will bring us towards the end of September. Cowes will be dreary enough then, only invalids and old people left."

But Phil has not heard the end of the sentence. He has abruptly turned on his heel and left the room.

Straight down the stairs he goes into Uncle Hugh's "den," where he finds the old gentleman in the midst of bags and boxes.

"I'm off to Ayrshire to-morrow," he says; "I can't stand another ten days here. The senora will look after Nell right enough. She seems a very quiet, capable person, though I had my doubts about her at first."

Phil does not hear him. He goes up to the old gentleman, lays his hand upon his shoulder, and demands vehemently, passionately:

"Why do you allow it—why, why? It is more than flesh and blood can bear to stand by and see it."

Uncle Hugh catches at his meaning, and grows suddenly serious.

"My dear young friend, will you tell me how I am to help it?" he asks.

"Help it! I would help it in your place," Phil exclaims excitedly. "Send away the yacht; do not allow such an arrangement to go on! Send it away at once—to-night in the darkness."

"What! Send away the only chance there is of prolonging her life! You don't know what you are saying."

Then there falls a silence between the two men.

Uncle Hugh is the first to break it.

"Listen to me, Wickham," he says, "just this once, and then we'll talk no more on this—this sad subject. When Ellinor first spoke to me seriously about her health, I was shocked as much as you are, but I think I did my best for her—yes, my best, I think. I consulted some three or four of the first doctors in London, stated the case, and asked what they advised. One and all said a long sea-voyage, and suggested a sailing yacht if it were practicable. Very well, a sailing yacht happens to be Ellinor's whim at the moment, and as it falls in with the advice given, why shouldn't it be followed out? Come, cheer up—who knows what it may do for her! She may yet come sailing back with a new lease of life—who can say! Let's take the best view of things possible; it's the only way to get our fair dues in life. Have a cigar! Do you know this brand—fine flavour!—had them straight from Havana."

Phil, with something of a groan, shakes his head, and goes out into the failing light, strolls for half an hour or so up and down the Parade, and then goes back to his hotel, and plays billiards half through the night.

How dare the modern preachers of Christianity taunt us with living "too much upon the surface!" Paradoxical as it may seem, life except upon the surface would be an impossibility to those who own to strong, deep feelings, sympathies, imaginations. A column of the Times, the epitome of news in a daily paper, is enough to break a man's heart if he reads between the lines, and "lets himself go" over it.

If the ice is thin, and the flood below deep and dangerous, walk lightly over the surface. Not a doubt, there is no other way of getting over the ground in safety.

Phil, at any rate, found it was the only way of getting over his ground. Uncle Hugh, also, guided less by his impulses possibly than by the dictates of an experienced egoism, came to a similar conclusion.

Ellinor's moods, however, were not always so calm and self-contained as on this particular evening that she stood surveying the Sphinx from her balcony.

There could be no doubt about it, the stately serenity which had been at one time a habit with her—nay, had seemed to be part of the woman herself—was nothing more than a mood now, that in its turn would give place to other moods, daring

or timid, cloudy or clear, as the case might be. Edie's soul imprisoned in Ellinor's body could not more lightly have run the gamut from cold, stony-hearted despair to a wild, tempestuous grief. Of the two Phil preferred the wild, tempestuous moods to the cold, stony ones. For one thing they were shorter in duration; for another it was possible to "make believe" under them, possible to persuade himself that the cheery words of hope which he whispered in her ear, when her head, weary with its passion of weeping, rested on his shoulder, were honest, true words, and had some sort of foundation in fact.

Yes, that was better than those long silent hours they passed together, Ellinor with the field-glass to her eyes, and lips that would open, then shut, and never a word escape them. Phil could see the words die on them, so closely did he watch her in those days, and in his heart knew well enough what they were.

When Phil was not with her the long, silent hours had been unbroken. Uncle Hugh, intent on his own pursuits, and bent on keeping up the delusion that the yachting trip would "bring her round all right," had passed but little of his time in her society, the senora had "known her place, and kept it," and one by one Ellinor's gay friends had flitted away from Cowes, leaving a small packet of representative pasteboard on the hall-table.

Gretchen's solemn Teutonic ears must have grown weary of the question addressed to her night and morning by her mistress with clock-work regularity: "Gretchen, how do I look to-day? Am I getting thinner, do you think?" sometimes varied by the order, "Gretchen, give me my hand-glass." And then for an hour or more at a time Ellinor would sit staring into it, as though in its placid glassy surface she could read prophetic tales of the future, or a whole history of days gone by.

On the evening that she had gathered the oleander-leaves she sat thus with her mirror in her hand, silent, dreamy, abstracted.

Gretchen dared not disturb her; yet there was that in her mistress's look and manner that night which startled her into something akin to surprise and apprehension.

"Shall I bring the candles nearer, madame?" she ventured to ask at length, after she had stood in silent attendance some three-quarters of an hour.

"Yes, quite close," was Ellinor's reply in a strangely vibrating voice.

Gretchen brought two candles, and placed them on a table at Ellinor's right hand, so that their light fell soft and clear athwart the mirror, lifting the shadows from the beautiful face that looked up out of it. A face that might have been moon-washed for its whiteness, with a tremulous mouth, two large, dark-fringed, desolate eyes, a low, smooth brow, above which rested a veritable weight of russet-gold hair.

It might have been the face of a *Mater Dolorosa*, painted by Carlo Dolce himself, for the mingled anguish and beauty that lay written upon it.

And as Ellinor sat there gazing down into her own reflection a sudden wave of passion swept over her.

She pressed her lips vehemently to the cold glass.

"Oh, you beautiful—beautiful face!" she cried with a wailing, bitter cry. "You are mine! I love you—I glory in you—but where will you be hidden away this time next year?"

#### CHAPTER LVI.

A SEPTEMBER sky, sombre, hazy, with cold, watery sun showing fitfully between the masses of inky clouds; beneath, a murky, sullen sea, with broken lines of white along the horizon, a gull or two, flapping heavy wings as they wheel low over the sails of a large yacht, which rocks restlessly at anchor, and creaks in the gusts of a rough south-west wind that threatens before night to become a gale.

This is the sea view.

On shore, swinging elms and sighing beeches, falling leaves, and deepening shadows. A restless flitting and fluttering of swallows in and out of the ivy that overhangs a big stone balcony, where, in large tubs, stand two oleanders, not now in the glory of their pink bloom, but with limp, brown, decaying blossoms, and leaves going from green to yellow.

This is the landscape.

At the window of the room on the floor above this balcony is a woman's face. She must be kneeling, for only the eyes and brow can be seen above the window-ledge. And kneeling thus, naught but a sea and sky picture can meet her view—three-parts sky and one of sea.

It is Ellinor Yorke. Thus for hours she kneels daily, gazing silently across the dreary expanse of cloud and water. No

one interferes to prevent her, no one asks her why she does it. Uncle Hugh is still away at a pleasant house in Ayrshire, and writes home hopeful, cheery letters of the health and strength Ellinor will bring back from her sea trip; the senora has not yet ceased to "know her place, and keep it," and Phil Wickham stands mutely by with folded hands and aching heart.

Sometimes he will break out passionately into a bitter cry, "Oh, my love, my love, I cannot bear it!" And she will look up at him with eyes that seem to say, "I can bear it—why not you?" Sometimes he will bend over her as she kneels, and kiss the folds of her dark, bright hair, and the hot tears will run down his cheek as he does so. Then, if she turn, she will fall to weeping also, for of late her eyes have "caught the infection of it."

He is so bending over her now, as she kneels, and one hot tear falls on the nape of her white, slender neck. She starts and turns. Then they clasp hands, and there is silent weeping between them once more.

Ellinor stifles her tears first.

"This is dying a thousand times over," she says; "better say good-bye at once and be done with it."

"No—no," answers Phil; "it must not be—it shall not be. Why must we part at all? Let me go with you on your yacht—what matters what the world says now? Heaven knows——"

Ellinor rises from her knees and lays her finger on his lips.

"Hush!" she says authoritatively; "only last night you swore to me never to ask such a thing of me again. Rodney Thorne used to wail at, and entreat me just in that fashion——"

"What has Rodney to do with me?" asked Phil, fiercely, savagely. "Let him be."

"I would 'let him be' with pleasure, only sometimes now he will not let me be—at nights, that is. Well, never mind! Only I will never have such words spoken to me again."

"Then," cries Phil, catching her in his arms and holding her tight to his heart, "if I may not go with you you shall not go without me. I vow before Heaven I will not let you go!" And he kisses her hotly, passionately; then, fearful of tiring her with his vehemence, he places her in a low easy-chair, and kneels on the ground at her feet.

Ellinor gets back her composure slowly.

"Supposing you will not let me go, what then?" she asks with never the ghost of a smile fitting across her pale face.

"What then!" repeats Phil in a half-dazed tone.

"Aye, what then? Think for how long you would be able to say 'I swear before Heaven I will not let you go!'"

Phil's words come in a torrent.

"I do not believe it—I will not believe it; it is lies—all lies—what those doctors said. You are killing yourself by inches with thinking over it," he cries hoarsely.

A peculiar expression passes over Ellinor's face.

"Two days ago," she says quietly, "I saw Gretchen putting aside a letter to be sent to Uncle Hugh with some others. It had a broad black border, and was addressed to me in my mother's writing."

Phil stares at her dumbly.

"And this morning," she goes on, "when I awoke I felt my handkerchief was wet, and I thought for the moment it must be with the tears I had shed in my sleep. When I looked, it was wet with blood. Juliet's illness began in this way."

Phil groans and hides his face in her dress.

She caresses his light curly head as it lies on her lap.

"Poor Phil—poor Phil!" she says softly. And then there falls another silence between them.

Once more Ellinor is the first to break it. She draws from the bosom of her dress a small packet.

"See," she says. "Look up."

And Phil, looking up, sees five dead, blackened leaves of an oleander-tree.

"Only five are left," she says, "and I'm going to throw those five away. Open the window, please."

But Phil lays his hand upon her arm, and will not let her rise from her chair.

"You shall not do it!" he cries impetuously; "or if you do, it shall make no difference. You shall not leave me, or I will not leave you. It shall be which you please. Be reasonable."

Ellinor interrupts him.

"It is what I ask of you to be reasonable. Let us talk the matter out once and for ever. What do you want to wait on here for? To see my sufferings begin? To watch me day by day getting weaker, not able to leave my room one day, the next unable to leave my bed? Is that what you'd wait on to see? What sort of a parting should we have

then, do you think? A clutching at each other's hands, a gazing into each other's eyes till mine grew dim and I could see no longer!"

"Stop, stop, stop!" cries Phil, jumping to his feet. "For Heaven's sake, stop! I cannot stand here listening to you and not lose my senses!"

She does not rise from her chair.

"Yet you think you could bear to see all this and not lose your senses?" she says quietly. "Take my word for it, it is better to say good-bye now—to-day, and be done with it, than have the good-bye extended over—well, say two or three months longer."

Again there is a pause. Ellinor dallies with the dry, dead leaves she holds in her hand.

"One, two, three, four, five," she counts them again. "There is something else I have had to say to you for many a day past, and I have put it off—put it off."

She speaks slowly, dreamily, as though the shadows from another world were already beginning to unfold her.

Then she rises from her chair, goes to the window, and unlatches it. A cold rush of sea-breeze fills the room. One, two, three, four dead leaves flutter from her hand, and drift away on the wind.

Phil puts his arm round her waist, and clasps his fingers tightly over the remaining leaf.

"Give me one more day—for Heaven's sake, give me one more day, if no more!" he implores.

She shakes her head.

"The senora and Gretchen are already on board," she answers quietly. "I have ordered a boat to be ready for me in half an hour's time. You shall row me down—that is, if you will, after I have said what I have to say."

Phil stares at her vacantly.

"What can you have to say—that that will make any difference now?" he begins, stumbling and halting over his words.

"Only this—I will tell it you right out without any preamble: when Edie Fairfax gave you up, you thought it was because she loved someone else, did you not?"

Phil's stare is a stony one still. Edie's name, thus suddenly brought before him, startles him much as a thunderbolt might in the middle of a snowstorm.

Ellinor goes on, not waiting for his reply:

"Very well, I tell you such was not the case. She gave you up wholly and solely because Lucy Selwyn wrote to her, telling her you loved me, and your happiness depended on winning me. There, you know now. I have known this for many a day past. Lucy could keep nothing from me I chose to find out."

Phil feels choking, he staggers to the window to get the sea-breeze in his face. His heart seems cleft in two. Great Heavens! what a revelation to make—and at what a time!

Ellinor follows him.

"You will ask me why I tell you this? I don't know—I can't say; just a whim—nothing more. Something to think about when I get on board my yacht. I shall picture you and Edie kissing and making it up when I——"

"Stop!" cries Phil, laying his hand on her mouth. "What are you trying to do? You break my heart. Do you wish to break my brains also, and make a lunatic of me right out?"

In good truth, more than half a lunatic he looks already. Another five minutes of such talk may send him the rest of the way.

Another rush of salt breeze comes in at the open window. Ellinor, as she talked, had laid her final leaf on the ledge. The wind catches it now, and with a whirl sweeps it away and out of sight—the dead, useless thing that it is.

Ellinor grows a shade paler. "Ah, Fate decides for us, do you see?" she says faintly. "Well, don't forget I have told you that Edie loved you when she gave you up—loved you always, loves you now!"

She breaks off a moment; then she throws herself, passionately weeping, on his breast.

"Oh, my love—my love!" she cries heart-brokenly, "false as I have been to all the rest of the world, to you, at least, I have always been true!"

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## ONLY A BUSINESS MAN.

BY MAY DRYDEN.

### CHAPTER VIII.

NOTHING could daunt Matilda. Phœbe had always thought so, and now she was sure of it. Phœbe was terribly disconcerted by her visitors when, on the following day Gordon Fenchurch came home from town by daylight, and called with his sister at Mr. Carfield's. She thought it was a terrible complication of affairs when her father, coming in just as they were going, invited them to stay to tea. However, she rose to the occasion heroically, and tried hard not to seem conscious of the untidy condition of the room, and of the fact that her mother's head-dress was very dirty, and set crookedly on her rough hair. But as for Matilda, nothing and nobody could daunt her. She felt herself equal to any emergency, and at once determined to show herself superior to all difficulties, and give her guests what she called a "decent" tea.

Phœbe was inexpressibly grateful to her sister when, on entering the dining-room to take her place at the head of the table, she found it spread with a clean, white cloth in place of the much-bedaubed one that had served them at breakfast-time, while hot buttered-scones steamed fragrantly on the best china dishes, and a supply of their fresh home-laid eggs was added to the meal.

Matty had caught the boys, too, as they came home from school, and, awing them with the wonderful news of a lady and gentleman to tea, had induced them to change their jackets and collars, and otherwise to make themselves presentable. She had even found time to put Bunyan into a clean pianfore, though, as a rule, she hated to do anything for the baby-boy.

Phœbe drew a sigh of relief as her brothers came trooping into the room, looking so respectable and clean that their good looks were quite noticeable. She applied herself to pouring out the tea with a mind so nearly at ease that she almost enjoyed the novelty of the experience, and when Gordon said a few words expressive of his surprise at the size of the family, she summoned up courage to ask him if he wondered now that she had no time for paying calls.

"Indeed," said he, "I should be surprised if you found any spare time, with all these boys to look after."

"And indeed, sir!" said Mrs. Carfield indignantly, "you are very much mistaken if you imagine Phœbe has not plenty of time to idle away when she likes! If she chooses to make a martyr of herself I cannot help it. She is fond of complaining that she is overworked, but she is not, I assure you."

"Isn't she, though?" exclaimed Peter, with the impulsive indignation of fifteen years. "Isn't she? I know better than that. This house could not go on for a day if Phœbe stopped working!"

Phœbe's face had flushed painfully, and she bent her head over her plate, feeling ready to cry with shame.

Luke's eyes flashed ominously; he never could bear to hear Phœbe found fault with.

"Gently, mother," said he sternly, and Mrs. Carfield let her voice die away into inarticulate murmurings.

Gordon looked curiously and approvingly at Peter. He was thinking that gratitude was a virtue rarely found in a boy of his age; nay, cynic that he was, he would have said rarely found, if ever, in any human creature.

To make a diversion, Clarence asked for



the names of the family, and learnt them with much amusement—so much, that Matty was emboldened to tell her the reasons of their being so strangely christened.

"You see," said she, "we have an immense number of relations, principally uncles and aunts, and they are all of them tolerably well off, and a good many of them have no children. So when we babies came—where we were not at all wanted, by-the-bye—father thought it would be only wise and prudent to propitiate the aunts and uncles if possible. Therefore, father called Luke after great-uncle Luke Carfield. Uncle Luke is an extremely clever old gentleman—a Presbyterian minister. He was pleased, and promised, if Luke grew up to answer his expectations, he would do something for him. But you did not, did you, Luke?"

"Not a bit of it," said Luke; "very much the reverse."

"What were these expectations then?" asked Clarence.

"I do not know exactly," said Luke. "I only know that when I was about thirteen years old, Uncle Luke sent for me to spend a day with him, and examined me very carefully in Latin and Greek. He was not very well satisfied with me, I imagine, and I am sure it was no wonder—I was an awful dunce in those days. But he only shook his head very gravely, and said to Aunt Susan: 'It may perhaps be that, though the boy has no talent for languages, he has the gifts of grace and composition.' And then, Miss Fenchurch, he shut me up in his study to write a sermon on the text: 'What went ye out for to see? A reed shaken by the wind?'"

"Did you write it?" asked Clarence, her eyes sparkling with a keen appreciation of the comicality of the situation.

"I wrote 'Christian Brethren' very large at the top of my paper. I always wrote a good hand, and I followed it up at neat intervals with firstly, secondly, thirdly, and finally. Then I sat for an hour in deep meditation, trying with all my might to think of a few suitable sentiments to write in between. But only one sentence came of all my cogitation, and as that belonged properly to the end I wrote it there."

"What was it?"

"The lesson which we ought to learn from this is to be good."

"Oh, Mr. Carfield!"

"Pray laugh, if you wish to do so," said Luke. "You will not hurt my feelings."

Mr. Carfield, senior, looked rather annoyed, and Daniel remarked with some asperity:

"I wonder, Luke, that you are not ashamed to tell that story of yourself. I am sure you ought to be."

"So! And why, pray?" asked Gordon quickly.

"Luke is a good boy—a good boy," said Mr. Carfield sadly. "But stupid—very stupid."

Clarence glanced at Luke to see how he relished this character of himself, and, meeting his eye, flushed, and looked quickly down.

"Well," said Matty, "Luke having proved quite satisfactorily to my great-uncle that he was not cut out for a minister, he declined to have anything more to do with him. He sent him home with five pounds in his pocket, and has never taken any notice of him since; and that is the history of Luke's name. Phoebe and I come next, and we are named after two maiden aunts. They are very shy, retiring old ladies, with a great horror of anything strong-minded in a woman, and they think such innocent things strong-minded. When Phoebe was fifteen we went to stay with our aunts, but they did not take kindly to us. They sent us home with dreadful characters. For Phoebe had actually ventured to have opinions of her own, and to express them, and had entirely refused to be converted by the curate. I was worse—much—for I had actually gone upstairs with my boots on, and whistled like a great ploughboy all over the house, to say nothing of going out by the window once or twice instead of the door. We returned home rejoicing. We had been in great alarm lest they should want to adopt one of us, and we had made up our minds that we could not stand that. They send us a sovereign each now, every New Year's Day, and we send them respectfully grateful little notes in return, and beyond that we have no communication with the old ladies."

"I am sure it was not my fault," said Mrs. Carfield pitifully. "I tried my best, and was always telling them they would never do for their aunts. But I never could make my girls behave in what I consider a ladylike manner."

This being one of Mrs. Carfield's pet grievances, Matty hastened to continue:

"Father thought that as he had made a mistake with Luke he would be quite safe with Daniel, so he called him after Uncle Dexter, who is a farmer."

"As if," said Mrs. Carfield, "my Daniel could possibly be anything so vulgar as a farmer!"

"What is he then?" asked Gordon Fenchurch.

"Daniel," said his mother proudly, "is a poet. He inherits a poetical tendency from his father."

"Indeed! And pray who is his publisher?"

Daniel's brow was lowering blackly, and Phoebe began to look anxious. They both detected the touch of sarcasm in Gordon's question. Clarence noticed their discomfort, and interposed:

"How did Uncle Daniel like having a poet for his nephew?" she asked.

"Oh, not at all! He is disgusted. He had meant to adopt Dan. As for the younger ones, they were christened to please Uncle Luke. But it remains to be seen whether any of them will turn out what he would consider satisfactory."

"I shall not," said Peter gloomily. "It's no use my trying."

"Ah," said Gordon, "you are the next on the list, are you not? So you do not fancy being a parson?"

"I hate the idea!" said Peter energetically; and then, colouring furiously, applied himself to his bread-and-butter, and hoped Mr. Fenchurch would take no further notice of him. But Gordon continued to question him.

"When do you leave school?"

Peter looked at Luke, who said:

"Next Midsummer. Peter has done remarkably well at school, but I am afraid we cannot keep him there any longer."

"And what is to become of you then?"

"Don't know," muttered Peter, his voice getting gruff. But he brightened up wonderfully at Gordon's next question.

"Are you fond of machinery?"

"Yes, very," was the quick response.

"Then you may come with me, if you like, on Saturday, and I'll show you all my new machinery in the new mill I've built down in the hollow. You don't go to school on Saturday, do you? Come, Clarence, it is time we were going home."

As Clarence rose to go, she said:

"When will you girls come to see me? Soon, I hope, both of you."

"Can't," said Matty shortly and firmly.

"Why not?"

"No time."

"Then you must make time," said Clarence, nodding her head defiantly. "It would be too disappointing not to see you

when I've just begun to know you and to like you."

"Oh, you know nothing of us yet."

"Indeed I do. I know that Daniel is clever, and Phoebe is wise, and you——"

She looked up enquiringly. She was a small, delicately-made girl, and looked even smaller than she really was by the side of Matty's tall figure.

"Oh, I am nothing particular—only a sort of a prop."

"You call that nothing particular, do you?"

"Yes. There are lots of girls who do not differ any more from me than one telegraph-post does from another."

"Well, you will come and see me, will you not?"

"No."

"Well, then, I shall come and visit you. I mean to see you somehow or other."

"You can come, of course, but you will not like it. We are almost always busy," said Matty uncompromisingly.

"I may come, may I not?" said Clarence, turning to Phoebe.

"Of course," said Phoebe heartily. "You will always be welcome. Matty does not mean to forbid you, only she thinks you will find it uninteresting, and I am afraid you will."

"I shall come, then; and so, good-bye!"

Phoebe looked longingly after her.

"She is nice," said she; "but, of course, she will never come again."

"Of course she will come again," said Matty, judging more truly. "We shall have some friends at last, and it is all your doing, Phoebe. What a precious little sister you are!"

Clarence and Gordon were very silent as they walked home together; but, before they parted, Clarence said:

"So, brother mine, you are going to take another burden on your back?"

"I am like a donkey now, Clarence, with only one heavily-weighted pannier. If I can get the other pannier filled so as to balance, I shall go more easily."

"You do not like your business even yet, Gordon?"

"Yes, I do—I like it only too well. My nature is getting all lop-sided because of my unequal panniers. Nay, Clarence, joking apart, I feel more and more that I sold my birthright when I became a Homcester man. Let me at least share my mess of pottage. Don't hinder me from doing any good thing. Force me to it, rather. I am

afraid—daily, hourly afraid—my conscience gets more dull every day. Oh, Clarence, help me to keep from falling into temptation!"

What could Clarence do but put her arms around his neck, and, calling him her "good brother, her dearest, her best," comfort, and love, and soothe him, and try to win back for him the self-confidence which so often and so sadly failed him?

#### CHAPTER IX.

THE winter had settled down on Homcester and the neighbourhood of the great town with unusual severity. The city itself was at its worst; fog, snow, and interrupted traffic made money-making a more laborious and disagreeable pursuit than ever.

Gordon Fenchurch did not go into town every day now. The new mills in the hollow had been open for some time, though the formal opening-party which he had promised his hands had not yet taken place.

These mills had already made a great difference in the social life of Wilton, introducing into it a new element—the mill-hand. The poorer class in the village had previously consisted almost entirely of colliers. There was work for five hundred hands in Fenchurch's factory, and some, though not nearly all, of these found homes in Wilton Hollow, where Gordon had built a double row of new cottages. These cottages were a special fad of his own, much condemned by Staniland and Mark. He pleaded that the hands must have somewhere to live; they replied that, at any rate, he was foolish in spending so much money on houses for them; an inferior sort of building, such as they had been used to, would do for them very well. He said that he was desirous of having a decent set of people about him, and that that could not be unless he housed them decently. If people were treated like pigs they would behave like pigs. Then his brothers shook their heads over his new-fangled notions, and prophesied ruin for him; and he quietly took his own way, as they had known very well from the first he would do.

Material things were working well together for Gordon at this time. He had taken up his burden when the depression in trade was so general that not one business man in a hundred could go to rest secure that he would not wake in the morning to find himself ruined.

Those were terrible times for Hom-

cester. Every day brought the news of some great failure. Old houses went that had been thought beyond all reach of danger. Great houses went, pulling down in their fall dozens of struggling small ones. Stagnation born of a universal distrust had taken possession of all the markets. No man greeted his neighbour without words of melancholy foreboding. Amongst the labouring classes the distress was terrible, such as young people had never seen before, and elderly ones compared with the trouble of the Cotton Famine.

In such a time as this had Gordon begun his life-work, and even in such a time had kept the great mills at Grenton open all the year round. Now the worst was passed, the majority of the people were beginning to feel at ease again, and Fenchurch and Sons was known as one of the most prosperous firms in Homcester, so prosperous that it was possible to build these new mills at Wilton, where Gordon and his sister had determined to try how much could be done towards establishing what they considered a right feeling between employers and employed.

The first step towards the consummation they desired was the building of the new cottages.

Long before they were ready for use stragglers began to be seen about the buildings on Sundays and half-holidays—lads and lasses principally who were "keeping company," and who had strolled over from the neighbouring village to look at Fenchurch's new houses. Each stood at the end of a nice little garden, and they were in every respect well built. There was no jerry-work in them. Every part of them was plain, but as good of its sort as it could be. All the doors shut easily and closely, all the window-frames fitted well. "It 'ud tak' a reg'lar ekinockshall to rattle 'em!" an admiring inspector was heard to declare.

So it came about that the possession of one of Fenchurch's houses was, in the eyes of the Wilton working population, a thing so greatly to be desired that, on the day when they were at last ready for use, not one of them wanted a tenant.

Lancashire folk are shrewd, keen judges of character, generally taking a man to be what he is, and neither more nor less, judging of him by his deeds rather than by his pretensions, and in no whit restrained from criticism by the fact that he stands to them in the relation of an employer. The

good work put into these cottages of his impressed them more favourably with regard to Gordon Fenchurch's honesty and substantiality, than would have done any amount of so-called good style in his way of living. He was sterling metal—in Lancashire phrase, "real Jannock."

Gordon and Clarence said very little about their intentions; they were Lancashire born and bred themselves, and believed in deeds rather than words. But they desired, above all things, to avoid falling into the mistake of regarding their mill-hands merely as a part of the machinery. They recognised the fact that they were human beings, and treated them as such, earnestly endeavouring by every means in their power to induce them to lead upright, godly, and sober lives, and to provide for them the means of doing so.

Christmas had been over and gone a week, and the weather was keen and bright in the country. Clarence and Gordon had seen their new friends more than once since their first introduction, and were beginning to wish to know them very well—not a very easy thing to do. Gordon, however, had made up his mind that he would know them, and only pursued the acquaintanceship the more obstinately because of the difficulties that were thrown in his way. So it happened that one Saturday morning he commissioned Clarence to invite the whole family to go with them to skate in the afternoon.

"No buts, Clarence," said he as she was beginning to answer him; "I mean to have my own way in the matter."

"Gordon, do not be a goose," she replied; "I should like it as much as you would, but I do not believe Phoebe can skate."

"Yes, she can; I asked her. So now, Clarence, you go and arrange matters down there. I'm off to the hollow; I will come back early and drive you all up to the moat. If we do not have a splendid afternoon I am much mistaken."

Clarence tried, and Clarence succeeded, not by any means as a matter of course. Skating, however, was an amusement that Phoebe allowed herself, since it could be made to come under the head of wholesome exercise, and could not be called altogether waste of time; and she felt particularly tempted to go out and enjoy herself on this afternoon. In upon the midst of her household work came Clarence, her cheeks glowing, her eyes sparkling, her crisp hair blown in fair,

little natural kinks, under and about her plain blue cloth hat. She walked right into the house without ringing, as she had done once or twice lately, finding that such a course of proceeding disconcerted no one so long as she kept out of Mrs. Carfield's way. As she opened the kitchen-door and stood there, both hands thrust deep into her jacket-pockets, her head erect, a bright, sweet smile on her lips, Phoebe exclaimed:

"Oh, Clarence, how bonny you are—you look like a piece of this lovely day come indoors to tempt us!"

"And that's just what I am," responded Clarence. "Listen, Phoebe—listen, Matty; and here, give me that jar, and let me fill the mince-pies while I tell you. Do you know what it is like out of doors? Do you know that the sun is shining, and the ground all sparkling with frost? Do you know that it rings under your feet as you walk—that there's not a cloud in the sky, and that the ice on Granditch Moat is four inches thick? Hush, Matty! do not interrupt. At half-past two this afternoon, Gordon and I shall be here in the wagonette, and you are every one of you to be ready to start, skates and all. Now mind, tell all the boys they are to come, and Peter particularly. I am very fond of Peter. I should not wonder if some of them have to hold on behind."

The girls were taken by storm. It was not in girl-nature to refuse such an invitation as that. Clarence, like Gordon, was very apt to get her own way when she had made up her mind to it, and took a special pleasure in doing so when that way was his.

Granditch Hall is an old black-and-white building; it stands surrounded by the moat and by trees on the farther side of the moat. It is built round a courtyard, which you may enter by passing through the farmyard with its picturesque old barns, and by a great haystack, and under the ancient archway. The Hall is not all of it really old; it has been renewed time after time, but some parts of it are of undoubted antiquity, and modern and ancient are too ingeniously mingled in it for any but a skilled observer to find out which is which. There is a fine old ghost at Granditch, too, with many a weird story attached to him, and also, the Hall being empty now, a caretaker of the quaintest and shrewdest type of Lancashire woman, Mrs. Barton by name.

Mrs. Barton knew Clarence already, as

most of the people of the neighbourhood did. She knew that the young lady intended to be at the moat that afternoon, and met the wagonette with a cheerful welcome as it drove up, her bright eyes shining at the anticipation of certain shillings which she expected would find their way to her pocket before the day was over.

"Here ye be!" cried she. "Eh, Miss Fenchurch, I've 'ad sich a wark to keep th' water fur ya. 'It's t' family from Luxten Hall 'at's comin', says I to one chap; says he, 'I'm o' that breed mysel', and he's on noo; but there's a mony lads as I've chased away, and my certy, but they did sarce me!"

"Oh, Mrs. Barton, but you should not have said that!" said Clarence, while her brother laughed and said:

"Why did you not tell them the Earl was coming at once?"

"Because, ye see, I knowed as he were up in Lunnon, and I thought I mun put it upo' summon as is in t' neesborhood. But coom th' ways on now, and dunnet be losing time. 'I'll tak' care o' they cloaks."

That was good advice, and they followed it. Ten minutes more saw them all on the ice.

It was an afternoon of unadulterated enjoyment to all of them—enjoyment all the more pure because they had not yet discovered, those older ones amongst them, that it was each other's company that lent its greatest charm.

Clarence was the life of the whole party, whether gracefully practising the outside edge with her brother, patiently learning a new figure from Luke, or driving Daniel wild with jealousy, and delighting Peter's heart, by skating with the latter in preference to the former.

Then, when the fun was lagging a little through sheer weariness of limb, what could be more delightful than to be summoned by Clarence to tea in Mrs. Barton's cottage at the back of the Hall, to struggle up the bank, and over the flagged pathway, skates still on, with queer, ungraceful movements, like swans walking on dry land, and crowding into the little cottage-room, to perch on the settle, and revel in the big slices of home-made bread-and-butter, and the strong, sweet tea, which, though milkless, was very good. Mrs. Barton hovered round the merry party, tea-pot in hand.

"S' thee," said she. "It's a family tay-pot, this'n. None o' your little tay-pots fur me, as wants filling up afore ye can git any goodness out o' th' leaves."

"How have you been going on with Mr. Brackton since I saw you last, Mrs. Barton?" asked Gordon Fenchurch.

Mr. Brackton was the bailiff under whom the good woman held her office, and with whom she had an undying feud.

She laughed triumphantly.

"Eh, oi've gotten th' better o' 'im, oi con tell you. T' last toime as he were oncivil to me, I giv' him what for, oi con tell you."

"Ah," said Gordon; "and how was that?"

"Well, thou known he wonnot let me ha' th' key o' th' ghost-room. He is that grudgin', for sure he is! He connot abide that oi should mak' a few pence by showin' th' gentlefeawk round t' owd Hall. An' yesterday was a fortnight, there was some ladies come to see th' place, and he fun' me a-showing them round. He were civil to them, moind yo'. As smooth as yo' please. But when they'n gone, he comes to me, and he says: 'Mrs. Barton, you're not to show anyone this Hall wi'eant an order from me.' Says oi, 'Whoi could'n yo' say that'n when th' ladies were heer? Yo' were main an' civil to them.' Says he: 'O'm alike to all; they moight have come cawt of a stable, for ought I knew!' 'Ay,' says oi, 'they moight, but they didna.'" Mrs. Barton laughed triumphantly. "'They moight,' says oi, loike that, for yo' known," addressing the whole company, "yo' con always tell a real lady fro' a sham one, dressed-up loike. And says oi, 'What mun oi say when th' ladies want to go round?' Says he: 'Say, madam!' Eh! but oi let him get no further; oi had him theer. Says oi, 'Oi dunno' what "madam" means, and I b'ain't a-goin' to use such loike words to any lady.' An' then oi caw'd him, oi con tell yo'! Oi went into th' heause an' got a glass of whisky, an' when oi've gotten a glass o' whisky insoide o' me—only one—if oi've got owt agen anybody they're bound to have it. He went off into th' garden to my measter, an' 'Barton,' says he, 'has your wife always got as much tongue as she has to-day? Because if so,' says he, 'I pity yo.'"

That was evidently the crowning joke of the tale, and Mrs. Barton paused to join in the merriment her energetic recital had drawn forth. She continued to talk until her guests had finished tea, and then they went down to the ice again.

It was dusk now, and very quiet. The hushed silence of the evening twilight fell on their spirits, and less noise

attended their rapid flights. Not the less were they still enjoying themselves. They did not skate about singly now, it was lonely in the dark if by chance one wandered away from the party. So for an hour they flitted to and fro like gigantic bats, then, weary but contented, unstrapped their skates, and crowded once more into the wagonette. Phoebe found herself on the box-seat beside Gordon, and who can blame her if she felt an unwonted thrill as he gently threw a shawl around her, and tucked a rug over her feet, waiting on her with the chivalrous tenderness which he always showed to women, especially when he thought them rather hardly used by circumstances.

### STORYOLOGY.

#### IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

IN the last chapter we were considering popular superstitions attached to physical appearances. One of the most common forms of these is that known as "Fairy-ring," and, apropos of these, we recall, as we write, what the author of that delightful book, *Nether Lochaber*, has said about them in the Highlands of Scotland. "We can perfectly understand," he says, "how in the good old times, ere yet the schoolmaster was abroad, or science had become a popular plaything, people—and doubtless very honest, decent people too—attributed those inexplicable emerald circles to supernatural agency; if, indeed, any thing connected with the 'good folks' or 'men of peace' could properly be called supernatural in times when a belief in fairies and every sort of fairy freak and frolic was deemed the most correct and natural thing in the world. Didn't these circles, it was argued, appear in the course of a single night? In the sequestered woodland glade, nor herd nor milkmaid could see anything odd or unusual as the sun went down, and lo! next morning, as they drove their flocks afield, there was the mysterious circle, round as the halo about the wintry moon. . . . And if we know better nowadays than to believe these green circles to be fairy-rings, we also know better than to give the slightest credence to certain authors of our own day who have gravely asserted that they are caused by electricity. . . . Fairy-rings . . . are in truth caused by a mushroom (*Agaricus pratensis*), the sporule dust or seed of which, having fallen on a spot suitable for its growth, instantly germinates, and, con-

stantly propagating itself by sending out a network of innumerable filaments and threads, forms the rich green rings so common everywhere." Hardly more excusable than the electricity theorists, thinks this writer, are those learned authors who tell us that the West received the first hint of the existence of fairies from the East at the time of the Crusades, and that almost all our fairy lore is traceable to the same source, "the fact being that Celt and Saxon, Scandinavian and Goth, Lapp and Fin, had their 'dûergar,' their 'elfen' without number, such as dun-elfen, berg-elfen, mûnt-elfen, feld-elfen, sæ-elfen, and waeter-elfen—elves or spirits of downs, hills, and mountains, of the fields, of the woods, of the sea, and of the rivers, streams, and solitary pools—fairies, in short, and a complete fairy mythology, long centuries before Peter the Hermit was born, or Frank and Moslem dreamt of making the Holy Sepulchre a *casus belli*."

There is something very suggestive in these words of *Nether Lochaber*, and one thought is suggested particularly in the direction of our enquiry, and that is, may not the theory of the Aryan mythological origin of our folk-tales be as imaginary and as groundless as the theory of the Oriental origin of fairies? At the same time, let us admit that the superstitious belief in capnomancy—i.e., divination by smoke—still prevalent in some parts of the Highlands, is probably the relic of the old sacrifices by fire to the gods. In so far the superstition has a mythological significance, but then we are driven back to the consideration whether these gods were not actual personages in the minds of the old Celtic worshippers, and not symbols of natural phenomena?

So much, however, for popular superstitions; and as regards folk-tales, we must, in speculating as to their origin, as Mr. Farrer says in his book on *Primitive Manners*—"look not into the clouds, but upon the earth; not in the various aspects of nature, but in the daily occurrences and surroundings." The process of diffusion, as Mr. Lang points out, must always remain uncertain. "Much may be due to the identity everywhere of early fancy, something to transmission," but "household tales occupy a middle place between the stories of savages and the myths of early civilisation." And, we may add, nursery-rhymes are but the simplified form of household or folk tales.

This brings us, then, to the relation

between savage customs and ancient myths, and here we shall draw pretty freely upon Mr. Lang's last book.

The foundation of the method of comparative mythology is the belief that "myths are the result of a disease of language, as the pearl is the result of a disease of the oyster." The method of enquiry is to examine the names which occur in the stories, and having found or invented a meaning for these names, to argue back from them to a meaning in the myths. But then almost each scholar has his peculiar fancy in etymology, and while one finds a Sanskrit root, another finds a Greek, a third a Semitic, and so on. Even when they agree upon the derivation of the proper names, the scholars seldom agree upon their interpretation, and thus the whole system is one full of perplexity and confusion to all who approach its study with unbiassed minds. There is a further division among the mythologists, for there are some who have a partiality for sun-myths, others for cloud-myths, sky-myths, and fire-myths, and each seeks to work out an interpretation of an old-world story to suit his own taste in myths. We are not so presumptuous as to say they are all wrong; but how can they all be right? And in whom can we have confidence when we find so much disagreement, first, on the derivation of names, and second, in their meaning, after the derivation is discovered? And then, how do we know that words had the same meaning to the ancients as they have to us? Was the sky, for instance, to the original story-makers "an airy, infinite, radiant vault," as it is to us, or was it a material roof, or even a person? And then, how is it that we find the same myth, with slight alterations, in various parts of the world, but with totally different names?

In opposition to the method of reading myths by the philological analysis of names, there is the method of reading them by folk-lore—i.e., by a comparison of the folk-tales and customs of primitive peoples. The student of folk-lore has to collect and compare the similar relics of old races, the surviving superstitions and traditions, and the ideas which still live. He is thus led to compare the usages, myths, and ideas of savages, with those which remain among the European peasantry—classes which have least altered by education, and have shown least change in progress. It is thus that we find even in our own country and in our own day

such things as the belief in fairies and the divination by smoke, which are as old as time. Similarly, the harvest-custom which is still practised by the children in parts of rural England and Scotland—the dressing-up of the last gleaner in human shape, and conducting it home in musical procession—is parallel with a custom in ancient Peru, and with the Feast of Demeter of the Sicilians. But that does not necessarily prove any original connection between Peruvians, Scotch, and Sicilians, any more than the fact that the negroes of Barbadoes make clay figures of their enemies and mutilate them, as the Greeks and Accadians of old used to do, proves any connection between the negroes and the Greeks and Accadians. If we find the Australians spreading dust round the body of a dead man in order to receive the impression of the footprints of any ghostly visitor, the same custom has been observed among the Jews, among the Aztecs, among the French, and among the Scotch, and where we find, therefore, "an apparently irrational and anomalous custom" in any country, we must look for a country where a similar custom prevails and where it is "no longer irrational and anomalous but in harmony with the manners and ideas of the people among whom it prevails." When we read of Greeks dancing about in their mysteries with live serpents, it seems unintelligible, but when we read of Red Indians doing the same thing with live rattlesnakes, we can understand the meaning because we can see implied a test of physical courage. May not a similar motive have originated the Greek practices?

The method of folk-lore then, is "to compare the seemingly meaningless customs or manners of civilised races with the similar customs and manners which exist among the uncivilised, and still retain their meaning. It is not necessary for comparison of this sort that the uncivilised and the civilised race should be of the same stock, nor need we prove that they were ever in contact." Similar conditions of mind produce similar practices, apart from identity of race, or borrowing of ideas and manners. In pursuing this method we have to compare the customs and tales of the most widely separated races, whereas the comparative mythologists, who hold it correct to compare Greek, Slavonic, Celtic, and Indian stories because they occur in languages of the same family, and Chaldean and Greek stories because the Chaldeans

and the Greeks are known to have been in contact, will not compare Greek, Chaldean, Celtic, or Indian stories with those of the Maoris, the Eskimos, or the Hottentots, because these last belong to a different language-family, and are not known to have ever been in contact with Aryan races.

Now let us, under Mr. Lang's guidance, take one or two examples by way of test of this folk-lore method.

The "bull-roarer" is a toy familiar to most children. It is a long, thin, narrow piece of wood, sharpened at both ends; attached to a piece of string, and whirled rapidly and steadily in the air, it emits a sound which gradually increases to an unearthly kind of roar. The ancient Greeks employed at some of their sacred rites a precisely similar toy, described by historians as "a little piece of wood, to which a string was fastened, and in the mysteries it is whirled round to make a roaring noise." The performers in the mysteries at which this implement was used, daubed themselves all over with clay. Demosthenes describes the mother of Æschines as a dabbler in mysteries, and tells how Æschines used to assist her by helping to daub the initiate with clay and bran. Various explanations have been offered of these practices, but let us see how they tally with any prevailing customs. First, the bull-roarer is to be found in almost every country in the world, and among the most primitive peoples. It is so simple an instrument that it is within the scope of the mechanical genius of the most degraded savages, and therefore it is quite unnecessary to suppose that the idea of it was ever transmitted from race to race. And as an instrument employed in religious rites or mysteries, it is found in New Mexico, in Australia, in New Zealand, and in Africa to this day. Its use in Australia is to warn the women to keep out of the way, when the men are about to celebrate their tribal mysteries. It is death for women to witness these rites, and it is also forbidden for them to look upon the sacred turndun, or bull-roarer. In the same way, among the Greeks, it was forbidden for men to witness the rites of the women, and for women to witness those of the men. Among the Indians of Zuni, Mr. Cushing found the same implement used by the priests to summon the tribe to the sacrificial feasts. In South Africa, Mr. Tylor has proved that the bull-roarer is employed to call the men only to the celebration of sacred

functions; and the instrument itself is described in Theal's Kafir Folk-lore. Now the same peoples who still employ the bull-roarer as a sacred instrument, also daub their bodies with clay, for no apparent reason unless it may be to frighten their enemies or any intruders. We thus find still prevailing in our own time among savage races practices, which are perfectly analogous to practices which prevailed among the Greeks. The reasonable inference, therefore, is not that the bull-roaring and body-daubing were first used in the rites of a civilised race of Greeks, and thence transmitted to Africa, Australia, and America, but that the employment of these things by the Greeks was a survival of the time when the Greeks were in the same savage condition as are the peoples among whom we find the same things now.

The Greek story of Saturn is familiar to every schoolboy. Saturn, it will be remembered, wounds and drives away his father, Uranus, because of his unkindness to himself and his brothers. Afterwards Saturn marries his sister, Rhea, and has several children—Demeter, Hera, Hades, Poseidon, and Zeus, whom he swallowed as they were born lest they might serve him as he served Uranus. But Rhea didn't like this, and at the time when Zeus was born ran away to a distant place. Saturn followed, and asking for the child, was given a stone, which he swallowed without looking at it. Zeus grew up in security, and in due time gave his father a dose which made him disgorge, first, the stone (which was placed at Delphi, where it became an object of public worship), and then the children, one after another, all living and hearty. The tale is told in various ways, but these are the main incidents. It is interpreted by the mythologists to typify, in its first part, the birth of the world and the elements; and the second part is held by some to typify the operations of time, by others the alternations of night and day; the stone swallowed by Saturn being the sun which he afterwards disgorges at daybreak. By others Saturn is held to be the sun and ripener of the harvests; by others yet again, the storm-god, who swallows the clouds, whose sickle is the rainbow, and whose blood is the lightning; by others again, Saturn is regarded as the sky, which swallows and reproduces the stars, and whose sickle is the crescent moon. There is a great deal of diversity of opinion, it will be observed, about this myth of Saturn, or



Cronus, as Mr. Lang prefers to call him. But it is curious to note how Mr. Lang traces all the leading incidents of this myth in various parts of the world. Among the Maoris, the story of Tūtenga-nahā is told, and this is a story of the severing of heaven and earth, very similar to the Greek story. In India and in China legends tell of the former union of heaven and earth, and of their violent separation by their own children. As regards the swallowing performances of Saturn, they find analogues in tales among the Australians, among the Red Indians, among the natives of British Guiana, and among the Kaffirs. The conclusion, then, is that the first part of the Saturn myth is evidently the survival of an old nature-myth which is common to races who never had any communication with the Greeks. The second part is unintelligible except as just such a legend as might be evolved "by persons in the same savage intellectual condition" as, say, the Bushmen, who account for celestial phenomena by saying that a big star has swallowed his daughter and spat her out again.

"Any true nature-myth," says Mr. Lang, "any myth which accounts for the processes of nature or the aspects of natural phenomena, may conceivably have been invented separately, wherever men in an early state of thought observed the same facts and attempted to explain them by telling a story." Therefore it is not surprising to find the star-stories of savages closely resembling those of civilised races. The story of the lost sister of the Pleiades, according to the Greek myth, finds a parallel in a tradition among the Australians. Of star-lore generally, it may be said that it is much the same even among the Bushmen of Africa, as it was among the Greeks and Egyptians, and as it is among the Australians and Eskimos.

One of Mr. Lang's most interesting enquiries is to trace the legend current among the Greeks, and known to us as that of Jason and the Golden Fleece, in the storyology of the Africans, the Norse, the Malagasies, the Russians, the Italians, the Samoans, the Finns, the Samoyedes, and the Eskimo. Some of the resemblances are exceedingly close and curious, but we cannot, without taking up much more space than is available, follow them here. Suffice it that they serve to shake our belief in the dawn-sun-spring-lightning interpretations of the mythologists, and drive us to the conclusion that the Jason

myth is not a story capable of explanation as a nature-myth, or as a result of "a disease of language." As Mr. Lang pertinently remarks, "So many languages could not take the same malady in the same way; nor can we imagine any stories of natural phenomena that would inevitably suggest this tale to so many diverse races." The theory is that the Jason story, like its analogues among strange races, had its origin in a time of savage conditions, when animals were believed to talk, when human sacrifices and cannibalism were practised, and when efforts to escape being eaten were natural.

We must, however, draw to a close, leaving reluctantly many other points which space will not permit us to deal with. We do not pretend to have conclusively established a case, for the subject is too wide and deep to be exhaustively treated in an article of this kind. We hope, however, that we have shown how good a case may be made out against the comparative mythologists, and, at any rate, we may have suggested to the reader a most interesting and profitable line of study. Perhaps we may be able, at some future time, to take up some other branches of it.

#### NATURE IN LONDON.

THE suburbs of London are remarkable for the variety of insect and animal life that exist within their indefinite borders. In spite of the bird-catchers, small birds come in flocks, and song-birds settle among the thickets. "There are more birds round about London," writes the author of *The Gamekeeper at Home*, "than in all the woodlands I used to ramble through." No farther off than Wimbledon Common, there are plenty of birds'-nests to be found, and it is needless to add, plenty of boys to find them, in spite of the vigilance of their guardians. At Barn Elms, encompassed by villas and new streets, the songs of birds can still be heard in the springtime, among the elms that have come down from Queen Elizabeth's time—birds as well as trees, no doubt, in unbroken descent. Sometimes, too, strange visitants from the wilder country beyond find their way into London. Not long ago a hare was seen to cross Brook Green—the Brook Green of Punch's volunteer, now a public parklet, with red Queen Anne houses rising about it—a hare that went loping leisurely along one dewy morning, and turned into

the Kensington Road. Wild fowl, too, have been seen circling about the Albert Docks, as if some tradition among the birds of the air preserved the memory of the marshy pools that once existed there.

Still, all this is beyond the scope of our present article, which is intended to concern itself about Nature in its city form—that Nature which has lost all trace of its country liberty, and has taken up its freedom of the City, with the sober livery that suits the atmosphere of town. Nor do we propose to treat of trained and educated Nature—of the small creatures in fur and feathers which help their owners by their tricks to pick up a precarious living. The depressed-looking parrot, for instance, who at the instance of some East End Fornarina in gilt earrings and necklace, picks out the card of destiny for the passer-by; or the wandering exhibition on a stage like a butler's tray, where canaries are the performers, firing off pistols, driving coaches, or dancing the tight rope, while two sleepy-looking cats watch the proceedings without any show of interest, awaiting their turn for a set-to with the gloves. It is this latter entertainment, by the way, that seems to have replaced the old "happy family," which proved too tame and undramatic for the present age, and has probably been broken up and scattered about like other happy families of more human interest. For these wandering performers are not peculiar to London. As a matter of convenience they may winter in London, but the summer finds them scattered about at places of popular resort.

But the Nature which excites our curiosity is the actual fauna of London—the sparrows that haunt its squares and gardens, the pigeons which hover about its public buildings: even the rats and mice, and other small deer that riot among its wharves and granaries. The ways of dogs, too, in London are worth a little study. That poodle, for instance, to be met with about the streets in the neighbourhood of Leicester Square, which roams about quite composedly, and never loses its presence of mind even at the most crowded crossing; and yet seems always to have something in the way of business to attend to. There is another dog which has a mission in the world to be met with on Waterloo Pier, a smart little fox-terrier, whose one absorbing vocation is neither rats nor cats, both unattainable, probably, on a steamboat pier, but which finds a far more absorbing occupation in watching for all kinds of

flotsam or wreckage that the tide may carry past. When he sees anything of importance coming within reach, his excitement is boundless, and his agitated barks bring out the piermaster with a boathook, who fishes out the log or whatever else it may be. "Jumbo" is then rewarded with the opportunity of giving his prize one vindictive shake, and then, amply satisfied, returns to his vigilant outlook upon the turbid tide.

Yet while the regular London dog can make himself at home in the streets, and find honourable employment therein, the country or even suburban dog becomes quite lost and bewildered in the general turmoil. Astounded by the number and variety of the human swarm about him, he fails to recognise his master's form, or to hear his voice and whistle in the general confusion, and a lost dog he is likely to become, unless collared and led along. Once we landed at St. Katharine's Wharf with a little French dog accustomed to a country life and to bark at carts, horses, or anything else that might be coming or going. On Tower Hill he was as gay as you please, barking merrily at the early cart from Billingsgate, at the guardsman doing sentry-go before the Mint; but when he came in sight of the phalanx of vehicles in Great Tower Street, he shrank back abashed and confounded. He saw the hopelessness of barking at them all, and seemed to feel that the delight of life was spoiled by too abundant opportunity.

But the lot of the lost dog in London is no longer a hopeless one. Sooner or later he is pretty sure to fall into the hands of the police, to be conducted carefully to the Dogs' Home, where, if his master has taken the trouble to look for him, a joyful meeting may be expected. And the same charitable provision has been proposed and partly carried out for cats. In striking contrast to the noisy, barking, agitated crew on one side of the "home" is the dignified quietude of poor pussy's seclusion. There are friendly cats who rub themselves against the wire netting and ask to be stroked, and sorrowful cats who sit silently by their untouched saucers of milk, and refuse to be comforted. But cats soon accustom themselves to new quarters, especially when they can't get out, and the general feeling among them is of contented resignation to the force of circumstances.

Cats, however, do not often get lost on their own account. Except in early kittenhood they rarely go far astray, and they

know the airy paths among the slates and chimney-pots even better than their owners do the numbered and labelled streets below. When a cat is lost generally some man is at the bottom of the mystery. In the country the gamekeeper is mostly the culprit; in London, apart from those prowling ruffians who make a market of poor pussy's skin, the pigeon-fancier is chiefly to be feared. A popular manual on the subject of pigeons airily gives directions for making a cat-trap. It is to be baited with a pigeon's head, and when the cat is caught it can be dropped into a bag, and the bag—but we will draw a veil over pussy's fate; the subject is too harrowing for a true lover of cats.

And yet there are many stray cats about London—homeless cats who may gradually starve to death if not taken in by the charitable. It is not the cat which has abandoned its home, but the home itself that is shut up and abandoned probably, and thus the animal of all others the most home-loving is left to the miseries of slow starvation, which must be aggravated by the mocking cry of the cats'-meat man, once a signal of delight. Many people, too, when they leave town for their summer holiday, shut up their houses and leave poor puss to the mercy of the streets. There is no longer an excuse for this, now that the Home at Battersea takes in cats and boards them on reasonable terms.

To a starving cat there must be something very aggravating in the bearing of the London sparrows. The sparrow's attitude is one of assured indifference; he hops jauntily about, almost within reach of Grimalkin's claws. Almost, but not quite. On the slightest movement on the part of the cat, the sparrow is away with a derisive twitter. Indeed, most cats of experience have given up the sparrow as a bad job, and take no notice of his vagaries. And it is rarely you see a full-grown sparrow fall into trouble, though as spring advances and the nestlings begin to leave the nest and flutter about, the cats take their toll of the weakest and least active. The wonder is that the sparrows are allowed to build their nests and rear their young in peace. But that they do so is quite evident from the number of young sparrows that appear every season, although it is rarely that one comes upon a house-sparrow's nest.

Lucky are those birds who get permanent quarters within some roomy

public building, such as Westminster Abbey, where there is generally a colony to be found, or St. Paul's, where their twitterings resound pleasantly in the huge dome. But while the sparrow within is a more or less unauthorised intruder, the colonies of pigeons which have established themselves outside, might, as far as ancient title is concerned, seem to have rights of possession more firmly founded than our own. From all antiquity, pigeons have hovered about the great buildings of great cities, and their cooings and flutterings have resounded in the Acropolis and the Capitol, as now in the quadrangle of Somerset House or about the façade of the British Museum.

Seen in the broken light of a fine spring day, with massive clouds showing against the dusky blue, the broad frieze of the Museum portico is all alive with pigeons, who strut about the broad ledges or flutter in and out of the hollows and about the limbs of the sculptured figures. Spreading out their tail-feathers, bowing and scraping, and ruffling up their iridescent necks in happy indifference to the world below; to the sight-seers who are sauntering up the broad steps, to the readers and students, who pass in and out with faces more or less lined and careworn. The same scene is going on as far as the pigeons are concerned, where executors, with wills under their arms, are making their way to the probate offices, or suspicious relatives, unblessed with legacies, are going to search for themselves to see what that will of Uncle John's actually did amount to—in the stony quadrangle of Somerset House, that is, where once grew the lime-grove planted by Queen Henrietta's father-confessor. Equally preoccupied, too, are the doves that flutter about the feet of Her Majesty's faithful Commons, and build among the pinnacles of the great palace of Westminster.

The official pigeons, as these birds may be called, which devote themselves to the service of the Crown, are very much of a feather; their plumage sombre and uniform, throwing back, as the dog-fancier would say, to the original "blue-rock" pigeon, the ancestor of all the tribe. Recruits from outside occasionally join the ranks, admitted by competitive examination, probably—a stray carrier, perhaps, that has lost its way, or a widowed dove from some neighbouring cote. There was a brown-and-white pigeon, the other day, on the Museum grass, which seemed to have found domestic joy among

the blue-rocks, and its progeny will show distinct markings for a while, which will disappear in the course of a few generations—that is, if its progeny are allowed to survive—for one has heard dark rumours on that subject apropos of the fact that these Civil Service pigeons, although they certainly multiply, do not increase to any appreciable extent.

As far as can be learnt, nobody feeds these pigeons. They pick up a living about cab-stands, and share in crumbs and broken victuals with the sparrows. An interesting incident in pigeon annals was the dynamite explosion at Westminster, in consequence of which the inner quadrangle was closed to cabs, and there was no more pickings to be had from that quarter. But in this emergency it is pleasant to add that the birds found a friend in Inspector Denning, who caused daily rations to be issued till the opening of Parliament brought cabs and horses to the rescue.

We may hope that in time other birds will become denizens of the gardens and open spaces that are now being provided for public use. When the trees on the Embankment attain a fair size, there seems no reason why birds should not build amongst their branches—that is, if the ever-destructive London rough can be eventually neutralised. And to hear the wild wood-note of some song-bird in passing along the Strand would be an experience worth living for.

#### A SPRING SONG.

Oh, the drifting scent of the violet buds,  
And the gentle fall of the rain !  
I hear your voice when the thrush sings out,  
And I hold your hand again.  
I am young, sweetheart, and the earth is fair,  
All the world seems sweet and true,  
When you kiss my lips, and I press you close,  
When the hyacinth blossoms blue.

Oh, the golden gleam of the catkin plume,  
When the first faint spring-flush came ;  
When the sweet flow'rs danced in the happy wind,  
E'en we knew or sin or shame !  
We were young, sweetheart, as the earth was  
young,  
And all looked fair that spring ;  
And we faced our fate with a dauntless breast,  
And I feared no single thing.

It all comes back in the springtide, dear,  
With the stir in the sleeping trees,  
With the joyous game of the daffodils  
That dance to the tuneful breeze.  
I am young once more with the earth's fresh youth,  
With the springtide stir and rush ;  
While I watch the work of the spring each morn  
On or flower, or tree, or bush.

And I learn that the earth is my truest friend,  
She is just the same each year ;  
Come sorrow, or sin, or pain, or bliss,  
Springtide and summer are here.

What matter that I am old, sweetheart,  
Or that you are false and dead ?  
The flow'rs are born, and the birds sing out,  
And the sky is overhead !

#### A GROUP OF IMMORTALS.

##### A STORY IN SEVEN CHAPTERS.

##### CHAPTER IV. FOREBODING.

ABSURD as it may appear, I stayed on at that hydropathic establishment, being in perfect health at the time, two whole months. Its fortunes were now made. The sweetness of the place, the liveliness of the society, the handiness of a health station near London and within a few hours' reach of Paris, the excellent cosmopolitan cookery, introduced at the suggestion of Mr. Bolingbroke—all these things contributed to a success quite unprecedented in the history of such ventures. For my own part, I felt convinced that the graces and accomplishments of the Bolingbroke family had more to do with the flourishing condition of the house than all the aforementioned causes put together. I, for one, was rooted to the spot, unable to tear myself from Lionelle.

It was odd that, although she had carried on many graceful flirtations during those two months, none were of a nature to make me, with whom she flirted most of all, in the least degree jealous, and none, as far as I could discover, had come to a climax except in my own case. The young Hindoo barristers, the curates, the half-dozen middle-aged idlers, had each in turn waltzed, strolled, sang, or played croquet with Lionelle ; but she contrived so nicely to restrict flirtation within its proper limits, that whilst all these men paid homage to her, not one had been permitted to fall in love. Even more creditable to her tact was the fact that, on the other hand, the women had not become jealous. She was so sympathetic, so ready to be taken into feminine confidence, so apparently free from vanity, that only the really ungenerous or malicious could possibly have picked a quarrel with her. As a rule, moreover, very young maidens do not frequent valetudinarian resorts ; and, except the pretty American damsels alluded to, who were sure to get plenty of admiration wherever they went, and needed not to begrudge Lionelle's share, she had few possible rivals. Our ladies were, for the most part, elderly spinsters or sober matrons, only too glad to have the sparkling, caressing vision of my Lionelle ever before them. My Lionelle, did I say ?

Mine, as yet, by virtue of adoration only. Into the future I hardly dared to peer.

I did, however, begin to put to myself in secret a few of those questions that naturally occur to a man suddenly bent upon marriage. Could the income that had never been too much for one, suffice for two—for a household? Would the much-travelled, versatile, brilliant Lionelle be happy by an ordinary mortal's fireside? Was I wise to throw in my fortunes with those of a family addicted to roving—perhaps not by any means unacquainted with adventure? Lastly, and above all, was I not bound to fathom the meaning of those eerie words of hers—to find out if she was something more than a mere paragon of beauty and excellence? Was she phenomenal among her sex—in a subtler sense separated from the rest of humankind by virtue of supernatural endowments or unexampled destiny? Was she, indeed, exempt from the wonted fate of human kind, doomed to perpetual youth, undying loveliness, an existence that ended not after the fashion of others?

It may seem strange that I should go to the length of asking myself such questions as these—entertain, even for a moment, propositions so diametrically opposed to everyday experience and the accepted order of things. But the unusual and mysterious had ever charms for me. From my youth upwards, the dominating characteristic of a careless, versatile nature had been a tendency to penetrate into the regions of the unknown, to lift the veil from the inscrutable, to study the Sphinx-like aspects of life. From the first, moreover, a certain indefiniteness, an airy unreality about Lionelle had fascinated me even more than her faultless outward self and her dazzling gifts. She seemed hardly to have a solid, tangible past, much less to look forward to any clearly-marked-out future. Even her domestic relations savoured of the unreal. Devoted, affectionate as she was to Mr. and Mrs. Bolingbroke, I doubted whether she was their daughter; nor could I at times believe that she was anything more than a sister by adoption of the handsome, agreeable, and accomplished, albeit somewhat cynical, artificial Julian. If, then, not of such kith and kin, what was her lineage? I allowed my fancy to run wild, and accorded her an origin as that of the Undines and half-fauns of romance, those unsubstantial, ineffably lovely creations of the poet we believe in and become enamoured of as if they were real personages.

But to be mated with a fateless child of immortals, to wed a being whose feet touched our familiar globe without belonging to it, to have to wife a fay, an elf-child wearing the guise of a mere woman—that was wholly another matter. Swayed, therefore, by two inclinations, two resolves, one moment wishing one thing, the next drawing back, I was at the same time prey to another kind of terror. I could not help entertaining suspicions that Lionelle would take sudden flight before my mind was made up. Some day we should all wake up to find the incomparable Bolingbroke family vanished, gone for ever, without warning and without farewell, returned to that unknown whence they had come. Lionelle once thus lost to me, so I felt convinced, I should never recover her again.

And not vague suspicions only pointed to such a catastrophe. Ever on the alert in so far as Lionelle was concerned, I had gathered from a stray remark here, a cursory hint there, that departure impended.

Keeping my own counsel, and affecting a well-studied indifference, I now watched the movements of the Bolingbrokes night and day.

Exactly what I had foreseen took place. As a rule, there are never any very late or very early departures in these valetudinarian resorts. People go away comfortably in the middle of the day, giving chance-made acquaintances an opportunity of saying adieu and exchanging little courtesies. But I felt sure that none of us were to have as much as an "Au revoir" from Lionelle's family.

Whenever wheels should be heard grating the gravel-walk at midnight or early dawn, the sound would be sure to indicate a stolen march on the part of the Bolingbrokes. The merest bagatelle—a trifle in itself so absurd that only a man in my desperately inquisitive case would have noticed it—let me into their secret.

In this admirably conducted house, where grace was never sacrificed to parsimony, certain economies were practised quite consistent with a liberal sumptuary scale.

Thus, whilst our table-napkins were regularly changed three times a week, I had noticed that in the case of visitors about to depart the next day no exchange was made. Having made sure of this fact, I steadfastly observed the table-napkins.

Sure enough there came a Tuesday evening when the rest of the company had, as usual, clean napkins, whilst those of the Bolingbroke party remained the same. And I knew without being told that Lionelle was to be taken away from me that very night.

#### CHAPTER V. VALEDICTION.

THE evening was one of rare beauty and sultriness, whilst, from a sociable point of view, it seemed as if it would never come to an end. Immediately after dinner the entire company adjourned to the pleasure-grounds, even the invalids venturing out to watch the moon rise. The youthful and venturesome had betaken themselves to the wide sweep of heath stretching above the establishment towards the sea, and a few strolled down to the seashore. It was the rule of the house that guests should retire to their chambers and lights be put out in the reception-rooms by eleven o'clock. Ten had already struck, and my chance of securing a tête-à-tête with Lionelle seemed slenderer than ever.

Now she was waltzing with a recent adorer, an elderly post-captain, who had returned to England after years of active service to cure a liver-disorder and presumably settle in life; now making the round of the flower-garden with a devoted adherent of the other sex, an old lady who had taken the greatest fancy to her; now dancing with Julian a bewitching old Spanish dance for the general benefit. Last of all, I heard her well-trained rather than fine voice leading a glee that suddenly delighted our ears from the extreme end of the inner garden.

Never had I seen this incomparable girl exchange one rôle for another with such grace and dexterity. Queen of the drawing-room, mistress of the art of coquetry and persiflage, sparkling, finished, brilliant, no part seemed beyond the limit of her capacities, and each was played to perfection. There was only one quality missing—that of spontaneity. It never seemed to me that Lionelle was moved by impulse like any other girl. This absence of spontaneity, combined with a certain studied faultlessness—the cold impersonality before alluded to—more than anything else, distinguished her from the rest of her sex. She lived, moved, breathed among us; but in one sense—the sense of careless, common enjoyment—belonged to us not at all. At last, I missed her on a sudden, and realised, with a quickened beating of the heart, that

the eagerly-desired moment was come at last.

She was hiding herself from her little world of hangers-on, in order to grant me a final audience.

It was the amiable custom in our little Arcadia for one guest occasionally to fête the rest. To-night, for no reason in particular, except, perhaps, that the unwonted charm and serenity of the weather inspired a feeling of jollity, light sparkling wine and dainty cakes were served to all by our post-captain in the dining-room.

Nothing, perhaps, so completely absorbs the mental faculties as the behaviour of a bottle of champagne at the critical moment of uncorking. How will the wine go off? Will it go off at all? Where will it go to? Such are the questions that for the moment keep out every other problem from the spectator's mind.

Public attention thus happily diverted, I now stole away from the rest of the company, sure, at least, of ten minutes with Lionelle. I knew well enough where I should find her. There was a certain little summer-house, in which I had caught the weary girl drowsing many a time before now. No more than Julian could she win everybody's heart without paying heavily for such excessive popularity. Sometimes, as I scrutinised her handsome and youthful, yet slightly worn features, and graceful figure, often limp with sheer bodily prostration, I felt convinced that the girl was just killing herself with abnormal exertion, wearing out alike body and mind by this perpetual strain.

Yet she would never countenance such an imputation—never snatch a brief interval of repose except in secret. On this especial occasion, however, something in the shape of presentiment told me that it was not repose and solitude she sought now, but a final understanding with myself—a last word with her lover ere she quitted him for ever.

I knew well enough that she was not in love with me, that she did not love me in the accepted sense of the word. I could hardly boast of having received any show of favour at her hands at all. Yet, despite the habitual indifference, aloofness, impersonality of her manner, I perceived, or thought I perceived, a touch of real feeling—sisterly, friendly, it might be, yet real feeling, nevertheless. She had been invariably kind to me, and had seemed to understand my sympathy, my lurking compassion for what I could but take to

be an unwelcome lot. It was evident that, in some way or other, Mr. and Mrs. Bolingbroke made capital out of their daughter's gifts, and traded upon her powers of fascination.

I had judged rightly. True enough, she was there. The moonlight played upon her white silk dress and gleaming ornaments—the brooch and bracelets of serpents self-entwined in gold and enamel. Once more, too, she wore her symbolic flower, bloom of amaranth. The crisis I felt impending, her silence, her beauty, gave me courage.

"Lionelle!" I cried, and the words that had trembled on my lips for days—nay, weeks past, were out at last, spoken beyond recall. "Lionelle, stay with me. Consent to become a mere mortal's wife!"

We were alone and secure from eavesdroppers, at least for a moment. Emboldened by her passiveness, and growing courageous under the desperate fear of losing her for ever, I added a wild word more.

"You say you cannot grow old and die like other maidens. At least you can love as well as they. Retain, then, your vaunted immortality if you will. Only love me, let me love you for this little life—this brief, brief mortal span."

She smiled very pensively and kindly, and, without a shade of coquettishness, much less emotion, made room for me on the rustic bench beside her.

As we thus sat, the moon shining full upon us, I saw how pale she was, how more than weary! My love became all at once tinged with strangest pity. I longed now to be let into the secret of her mysterious lot as much for her own sake as my own, to be permitted to wrest her from it—to give her repose, heap tendernesses upon her so long as I lived. Her very collectedness, and the easy cordiality of her manner, inspired confidence. The more approachable she seemed the less outwardly lover-like I permitted myself to appear, so unwilling was I to check her growing trustingness and nip her confidences in the bud.

"You must know it," I went on. "This existence of empty pleasure and ephemeral popularity is undermining your health—killing you, in spite of that exemption from mortal doom at which you hint. Let me snatch you from such a career. Marry me without more ado," I added caressingly, "then we will steal away to some sweet spot, there to live for ourselves and each other."

She shook her head, that weary little

head, and as on a brother's breast it now drooped to mine—lay there for a blissful moment pillowed to sweetest rest.

"Gerald," she began—we had already once or twice called each other by our christian-names—"dear friend Gerald, even my friendship can be yours for a day, an hour only—love I have none to give. I am going away. You will soon lose your poor Lionelle, and you must never try to find her—never, as long as you live."

"Nay," I retorted lightly, yet under a jesting word was hid a fast resolve. "The locomotive—if not love's wings—may be the privilege of all. You cannot prevent me from purchasing a railway-ticket, no matter how it is stamped."

She now roused herself from her lethargic attitude, and sitting up, held my hand fast whilst she spoke rapidly and eagerly, as if in terror lest time should steal a march upon us.

"If you value my peace of mind—if you care for me at all, you will retract those words; you will give your promise never to try and discover me—never to follow me, in whatever direction I go."

What conceivable right had she to demand such a sacrifice of me? How could I rely upon myself to keep such a compact if wrought upon to make it? The farther this beautiful vision of Lionelle receded from my reach, the more passionately I clung to its vesture skirts.

"You are wilfully shutting your eyes to the truth!" I said, for a moment letting outraged feeling have its way; then, subdued to a softer mood, overcome by my great love for her, I gathered her little hands to my lips, and kissed them again and again. "No, Lionelle, it is not so," I cried. "My secret was yours long ago. You know how I love you. Listen. This worldling of yours never cared for anyone or anything in the wide world till he learned to know you. Bid me not lose you altogether."

"My poor Gerald!" she began, and in her turn she took my hands and pressed them to her cold lips. "I am linked to the strangest fate against my will. If, indeed, you were to track my footsteps, and follow me to the world's end, you would be no nearer happiness. You could not belong to me any more than if we were at opposite poles. I am in reality as much of a stranger to you as if we had never watched the glow-worm under the rose together!"

There ran through the speech, mingled with much sadness, even tinged with despair, a playfulness that gave me courage

to ask more. The comrade was uppermost in Lionelle's thoughts, not the lover. Perhaps in him she might yet be won over to confide. And I still clung to the shadow of a hope.

"At least tell me why you impose such unnatural conditions? Who and what are you, that you can thus afford to toy with human affection, and make a jest even of mortality?"

"Ah, those are questions—questions I may not answer; but rest assured of one thing," she answered, "I am not the light-hearted, sportive girl you take me to be. Against my will, against my conscience, I am compelled to act a part."

"Free yourself, then, from such odious thralldom!" I cried. "The door stands wide. Escape is easy. Take the honest hand held out to you."

She smiled, and putting a hand on each of my shoulders, bent her face towards my own as she answered, her voice gathering force and persuasiveness, her eyes wearing a strange expression of distance, yet endearment:

"I would love you, dear, if I could, but I have no love, no life to give. This much I may tell you. Love is dead within my breast; the strange lot that wins your pity is but the price of having loved too well! A task is before me—a goal I must win, and when I have done, happiness and affection can never be my reward." She added with sudden animation: "I rebel against my destiny, and would fain be free and careless like any other maiden. Yet in one sense I am privileged beyond most, for," she went on, now throwing into her words something of a real, passionate individuality, for the first time during our acquaintance giving me the impression that unutterably deep feeling underlay her words, "my real, my best self, the true Lionelle, will remain youthful and winning for ever. This poor beauty of mine you praise so much, strange as it may seem to you, can never fade."

I looked at her with a growing amazement that she did not fail to discern. Quick as lightning she read my inmost thought.

"Do not set down these words to unreason. I am no more moonstruck than yourself. It is as I say. Some day, perhaps, you may understand. My lot is to renounce, to suffer—yet with marvellous compensation. I have a dual existence, a second self—the one to become careworn, spiritless, the other never to be touched by the hand of Time."

Her cold, passive hand lay in my own, but responded not to my lover-like clasp; she realised what I was suffering for her sake—that I could tell without a word from her; but she had no hope to hold out to me, no consolation to give. And once more she reiterated the request that a few minutes before seemed so cruel, so unbearable, but that now hardly moved me from my lethargic despair.

"Let me go then, as I have come, for though you should seek me, you would but find a phantom, a hollow image; the Lionelle you love—never!"

She leaned forward, and I understood the gesture. A kiss laid upon her beautiful lips was to seal my reluctant word. I held her for a moment in my arms, but felt no heart beating in warm response to my own. The mouth I kissed was cold. I was about to whisper one desperate appeal more, her face still touched mine, when the silvery tones of Mrs. Bolingbroke reached us from the lawn.

"Lionelle, my imprudent darling, the night is chill. Pray come in at once."

## LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNN," ETC., ETC.

### CHAPTER LVII.

IN silence, side by side, they walk down to the beach, in silence they get into the boat, and sit facing each other, Phil taking the oars, and Ellinor the tiller-ropes. The south-west wind is slowly gathering strength; a few large heavy drops of rain splash down into the murky sea. There are not many boats dotting the waves now, and the Sphinx stands out gloomily in the gathering mist, sole representative of the hundred or so of yachts which, not a month ago, had made the Solent so gay and glad a meeting-place.

This silent, dreary adieu was not the one Ellinor had contemplated, when she had arranged her farewell programme in the height and turmoil of the London season. Then she had pictured to herself her beautiful yacht lying off Cowes in the glitter and glamour of the August sun, and she herself stepping out from her throng of admirers in the zenith of her beauty, and in the most brilliant of toilettes, waving and smiling a placid farewell before she disappeared from the crowd for ever.

Little by little, however, things had otherwise arranged themselves. The good-bye she had fancied could be said in a



minute had taken days and months to get through, and as time had gone by the glamour she had invested it with had faded out of it, and it now showed in its true colours as the dismal, dreary thing it was.

No eager, envious eyes followed her from the pier across the dingy waves, no crowd of small boats thronged the Sphinx anxious for a farewell nod from the vanishing beauty. There she sat alone in the stern of the boat, shivering even under her weight of furs, with a white, drawn face and sorrowful, lovelorn eyes, before which every now and again would fall a mist and veil as of tears.

And as for Phil, it would be difficult to put his thoughts and ideas at that moment into so many words as he sat there plying his oars with a slow monotony. Charon himself could not have done his work in more silent, dreary guise. Charon himself could not have felt more of a shade and less of a man than did Phil as he slowly neared the grim yacht. Fairy-like and dainty enough she had looked with her flag gaily fluttering under the August sun, and her white sails flapping in the August breeze. Now she loomed gaunt, drear, black, out of the September mist and drizzle—a veritable barge of Death.

Before they reach her side, the rain comes down heavily; Phil mechanically wraps rugs and mackintoshes about Ellinor.

"You will get wet!" he says hoarsely, and they are the only words he speaks during the brief row.

"What does it matter?" she answers in low, broken tones, and somehow the salt breeze, the mist, the rain, and the lapping waves seem to take up the words and repeat them over and over again in Phil's ears.

And then all of a sudden, to his half-delirious senses, the wind, and the rain, and the lapping waves seem to cease talking at him, and there seems to come an awful momentary lull and stillness, as though all creation were holding its breath before dealing some mighty stroke. He knows they are under the prow of the Sphinx, for he sees the big bronze wings, and reads the motto, "The rest is silence"; he sees Ellinor drop the ruddelines, and he mechanically draws his oars into the boat. He watches the companion-ladder lowered, he mechanically stands up and holds out his hand to help Ellinor from her seat, he sees her mount the ladder, gain the deck, lift her veil, and bend over the side towards him. He hears the grating of the anchor, the rattling of the

cables, he sees the graceful, beautiful schooner plunge forward in the waves like some grand steed suddenly set free from its stable, and then it suddenly strikes him that the woman, whose head, not half an hour ago, rested on his breast, is gone, sailing away to the "shore that hath no shore beyond it set in all the sea." He stands upright in his boat, he extends both his arms. "Wait for me—wait for me!" he cries, and the south-west wind carries his voice over the yacht's side to Ellinor's ears as she still stands leaning forward towards him. Then, as the schooner puts about on the other tack, and once more nears his boat, he makes one desperate jump, one eager clutch, as though he would grasp her wooden sides, and swing himself on board. He misses his hold, he misses his footing, his empty boat is tossed on one side like a walnut-shell; there is a dash of waters, a woman's cry of terror from the yacht, and Phil Wickham headlong disappears under the waves.

#### CHAPTER LVIII.

PHIL did not drown, however. Colonel Wickham, telegraphed for, and arriving at Cowes that same day, heard in one breath the story of Phil's mad leap into the sea, and his rescue from death by a passing fishing-boat. Later on, when the Colonel had somewhat recovered from the first shock, and was a little free to attend to minor details of the incident, he was told how that the Sphinx had put back, and lain at anchor for some four or five hours, sending messenger after messenger to the shore for tidings of Phil, and how that eventually, late in the afternoon, the schooner had once more set sail, all but unnoticed and unseen for the autumn mists and driving rain that shrouded the twilight.

Ellinor had not landed to say a second farewell. It might have been she dared not trust herself once more by her lover's side, lest that farewell should never be spoken save under the compulsion of Death's rude mandate. Or it might have been that her physical strength had suddenly collapsed under the shock of Phil's danger, that the nerves held at tension so long had finally given way, and she had been simply incapable of the bodily exertion.

Everything on the matter was, however, of necessity conjectural; record there was none.

Eddie was kept duly informed of the changes in Phil's condition by daily letters

from the Colonel. In the reality of Phil's and Edie's estrangement, Mr. Fairfax still steadily refused to believe. When the first news came of Phil's danger he expected Edie to give immediate signal for a flight to Cowes.

"It'll be 'hustle, bustle, and off we go now,' I suppose, my dear," he said, trying to put as cheerful a look on things as possible.

"Go! Where?" asked Edie in grave surprise.

"Why—why to Cowes—to Phil. Of course you know, pussy, you'll do him more good than all the doctors put together."

"I don't know it, papa, and I shall most certainly not go." This in a tone of yet graver decision.

"Now—now, Edie, what does it all mean? How I'm to get to the bottom of it all, I'm blest if I know! You don't mean to tell me that make-believe engagement of yours with Wickham is going on still?"

"No, papa, that is all ended, and I don't mean to have anything more to do with 'make-believe' now to the end of my life. And that's why I'm not going to Cowes, because if I went——"

She broke off abruptly and left the room, leaving the squire looking after her for his answer.

"Where was the use of explaining to him," so she said to herself, "that if she went to Cowes, Phil might possibly feel himself bound to 'make-believe' to be in love with her again, and that that would be every whit as bad as if she 'made-believe' herself."

Bitter pain, no doubt, it was and must be to know that her presence was no longer a comfort or necessity to Phil; to feel that he might be in sore extremity, at death's door itself, and have no room for a thought of her in his heart; but better by far the pain, let it be never so bitter, than any delusion, however sweet.

Right-down solemn, sober earnest should everything be now, she resolved, henceforward to the end of her life.

Phil, at that very moment lying in the border-land between the two worlds, would possibly have echoed Edie's resolve had strength been left in him to echo anything. Terribly shaken in mind and body though the man was, yet there was more of the old Phil Wickham in him than there had been for many a long day past.

An Eastern poet tells the story of a

certain star whose light, wherever it fell, set men thinking evil thoughts and doing evil deeds. Its light withdrawn, however, or quenched by the sun, the desire for evil subsided, and men went about an honest day's work once more. If ever a man had been ill-starred (in this sense of the word) it was Phil Wickham. And the light of that star which had dazzled and bewildered his brain quenched and gone, he was once more able to think his own thoughts, and would, no doubt, when return of bodily strength permitted it, be able to call his life his own to do what he (not another) would with.

That to the last hour of his life he would bear the bruises and scars left by this evil-starred nine months, went without saying. But what of that? Possibly his scars and bruises may save him a more deadly wound.

In all that goes to make life—thought, passion, joy, suffering—most of us in these latter days outlive Methuselah. Phil, in his short, sharp illness, lived out a lifetime, so packed was it with memories, sorrows, repentances, regrets. It was the sort of illness, indeed, that might aptly and literally be called a purgatory—a purgatory, however, that a man can only once in a lifetime be called upon to endure, and which (provided it be lived through) leaves him questioning the wisdom of ecclesiastical superiors, who preach the necessity of a second similar institution to inaugurate life in another sphere.

So when the 1st of October that year came round, it found no happy pair of lovers quarrelling and kissing beneath the shadow of the old walnut-tree, which shook down its ripe fruit and withering leaves at its own sweet will. A solitary starling foraged in peace among the dry grass and autumn wreckage beneath the low spreading boughs, and a solitary blackbird overhead sang, undisturbed, its requiem over the vanished glories of the "golden prime."

For the whilom happy lovers are happy lovers no longer.

Phil Wickham, white and thin still from his short, sharp illness, stands surrounded with bags and boxes in the hall of his hotel at Cowes, and Edie Fairfax sits in her own room with grave face, reading a letter that lies open before her.

It is from Phil, and runs thus:

"1st October, 1882.

"DEAR EDIE,—Now that I have my pen in hand I scarcely know with what words to address you. I dare not

apologise for failing to keep my appointment with you on this day, for I feel that even to suppose you expected me after all that has passed would be to offer you a direct insult. Words fail me altogether. It is impossible for me now, or at any future time, to explain the past to you, or set up one single plea in defence of the part I have played in it. I can only most humbly, most truly implore your forgiveness; I can only promise most solemnly that to the end of my life my shadow shall never again darken your path; I can only pray most earnestly that forgiving me you may learn to forget me, and in so doing may find peace and happiness once more.

"PHILIP WICKHAM."

Colonel Wickham came in as Edie finished reading her letter. His face was grave, nay, solemn as her own.

"I have come straight from Cowes," he said. "I suppose Phil has told you what his plans are?"

Edie in silence handed the Colonel Phil's letter. His face was graver still when he laid it down.

"I thought he would have told you," he said. "He has made up his mind to go to Australia—for how long I don't know. His old friend, Arthur Kenrick, has married an Australian heiress with I don't know how many farms and sheep-runs for a dowry. Phil has offered to take one of these farms off their hands. It might do for a time. For a permanency I confess I don't like the idea of it. The Kenricks will meet him at Southampton, and they will all sail together."

"When?" asked Edie, growing very white, yet setting her lips together tightly enough.

"To-morrow at noon. I came away hurriedly on purpose to see you to-day and tell you everything."

He paused, but Edie did not open her lips.

He looked up at her wistfully.

"Edie," he said pleadingly, "a telegram would find Phil at Southampton, and—and—" Here he hesitated a little over his choice of words. "Whatever you might hint or suggest to him, I feel sure he would feel bound to attend to."

"I have no wish to hint or suggest anything. The letter requires no answer," replied Edie with great decision.

So Phil was allowed to sail away to the Australian shores without let or hindrance.

And it so chanced that on the very day his big ship steamed in leisurely fashion into

Melbourne Harbour, the Sphinx dropped anchor, far away in the blue Algerian waters, with flag flying half-mast high.

#### CHAPTER LIX.

"It's confoundedly hard," said the Squire, jumping up from his comfortable chair beside the fire and beginning to walk hurriedly up and down the room. "It's a sort of thing that ought not to be allowed to go on. It makes one feel in a fog all round! I've never been able to get to the bottom of it all! From first to last it's been a mystery to me; everyone has been a mystery to me; you—Phil—Edie—of course! And now, just when things might have been set straight, for Phil to behave in this way! You oughtn't to allow it, Wickham—'pon my soul you oughtn't!"

It was a long speech for the Squire to make, and it was given in his loudest and most magisterial of voices.

The Hall had been shut up, off and on, for about two years—two years during which Edie and her father had been rambling about Europe in easy, objectless fashion. For a time Edie had felt constant movement and change of scene the best thing in life for her. After a time, however, she began to realise the fact that it was not altogether the best thing in life for her father at his age, and with his love for English outdoor pursuits. Accordingly they set their faces homewards once more.

The Squire, on the day after his arrival, was met by Colonel Wickham with the tidings that Phil had suddenly and unexpectedly returned to England. Arthur Kenrick had enjoyed but a brief span of happy wedded life, having fallen victim to a severe form of typhoid fever then ravaging the colony. His wife and boy had been committed to Phil's charge to bring home to Kenrick Manor, where the boy was to take his place as heir to a large estate.

Phil had fulfilled this charge, spent a fortnight with his uncle in London—he had not trusted himself within twenty miles of Stanham—and was now on the eve of once more setting sail for his Australian home.

It was this latter fact which had so disconcerted the Squire, and made him storm at his old friend instead of expressing all the pleasure he was bound to feel at once more seeing him.

The Colonel waited till he had finished, then he said quietly:

"It is out of my power to prevent it.

Phil is resolute; possibly he knows what is best for himself. I can quite see it wouldn't do for him to come back here—yet awhile, at any rate."

"And why shouldn't he come back at once—to-morrow? What is there to prevent him, I should like to know? What if he did carry on a flirtation with Ellinor once upon a time—it was nothing more; I always told you it was nothing more—didn't Edie herself drive him to it? Didn't she insist on breaking off her engagement with him when he was begging and praying me to let them get married? I've no patience! What will he do out in Australia all by himself, I should like to know—why he ever went there passes my comprehension. I never could make it out! From first to last it was an utter mystery to me. And now that the thing has come to an end of itself, why he can't be content and stay at home, and take life easily, as he used to, is beyond me—utterly beyond me!"

It was of no use trying to stop the Squire; he was evidently bent on storming. Colonel Wickham had not seen him so unmistakably "put out" for many a long day past.

Colonel Wickham has changed and aged greatly during the past two years, which he has spent almost entirely in his "Blue Book Parlour" in company with his rotatory-table and registrar's "returns." It is wonderful how quickly old people get older when young life disappears from their homes and young voices are no longer heard about them.

In vain he tried to divert the Squire's attention from Phil and his misdoings.

"Edie seems all the better for the change she has had the past two years, though she hasn't got back her old bright looks yet," he began.

The Squire did not even hear him.

"You're deucedly obstinate, Wickham—that's what it is!" he said, coming to a full stop in front of his friend's chair. "It's my belief, if you showed a firm front and threatened to cut Master Phil off with a shilling, he'd think twice before he started off again in this harum-scarum fashion!"

"Threats were never of any use with Phil. I've tried persuasion, and that has failed. Is it likely I shouldn't do my utmost to keep him at home, when there's no one else in the world to take his place with me?"

"Well, let me see what I can do then. When does he sail? He'll come down and

shake hands before he goes, at any rate, won't he?"

"I'm not sure. We as good as said good-bye when I left London. Between ourselves, I didn't urge his coming down here at all. I'm not quite such a good hand at good-byes as I used to be—take them more heavily, I suppose."

"Heavens and earth, man! you don't mean to say you're letting Phil go off again to the Antipodes without a good-bye from any of us! Why, I counted on at least half-a-dozen farewell rubbers with him. What's the world coming to?" And the Squire groaned aloud, and once more began his to-and-fro march.

Colonel Wickham sighed.

"I should have liked Phil to shake hands with you before he went; you were always such good friends," he began.

"Well, then let him come and shake hands," said the Squire crossly.

"There's no time, I fear; he goes down to Southampton to-morrow. I didn't question him too closely as to the day the ship sailed; but he'll let me know from Southampton, not a doubt. I fear there's no time now for any farewell business."

"A telegram would find him, I suppose?"

"A telegram—oh yes, of course! I shall have to wire to him to-morrow about one or two things."

"Well, wire to him to-night. Tell him I want him here for a day or two before he goes. There's nothing out-of-the-way in that, I suppose?"

The Colonel shook his head.

"It would be of no use——" he began.

"You're deucedly obstinate on the matter—that's what it comes to," again said the Squire, beginning to lose his temper once more.

Then he pulled himself up, took a chair facing his friend, and tried to reason the matter out with him.

"Look here, Wickham, I thought you agreed with me a moment ago that these young people had somehow made a mess of their love-making. Very well, then, it's time we elders stepped in and arranged matters for them. You know I was against interference earlier in the day, because I saw no good could come of it, but now that Phil is acting in this off-hand, desperate fashion, it's time something was done. Now, you undertake to get Phil down here for a day or two, and I'll undertake to bring Edie round all right. Or, better still"—this added with a sudden accession of energy—"let me wire to Phil, and coax

him over, and you undertake to manage Edie. Yes, capital idea! The very thing, don't you see?"

The Colonel smiled.

"You don't mean to say you're afraid your little daughter is too many for you?" he asked.

"Oh no, no—not at all!" answered the Squire with a fine show of dignity. "Nothing of the sort. I only thought, as you and she seemed always to get on so well together, it would be the sort of thing you'd like doing. And Phil and I have always been such capital friends! Yes, better leave Phil to me; he always would listen to reason. Put a thing before him in a right light, and he's safe to see it. But Edie wants peculiar management, and you always seemed to hit it off so well with her! Now, how would it be to-night, after our rubber—confound the dummy!—for you to get her quietly in here, and talk things over with her—get her to send the telegram to Phil! Splendid idea that would be!"

"I'll do my best, if you like, to-night, but I know it will be useless. You see, I've already spoken to her more than once on the matter, and nothing has come of it."

"Speak to her again. Don't lose heart! Be very firm with her, Wickham; speak with authority; you've my full permission to do so," said the Squire very loftily. "The truth of it is she's nothing more than a child after all, and really doesn't know her own mind two minutes together."

But Edie, at that very moment seated in her drawing-room receiving an unexpected visitor, looked anything but a child who did not know her own mind. The two years that have passed so heavily over Colonel Wickham's head have left their mark on her also. She looks paler, thinner, older by many years than the Edie Fairfax who, at one time, was such a capital hand at fun and flirting.

She was speaking very slowly and in very low tones, but there was no mistaking the decision she put into them.

"No," she was saying, looking full in her visitor's face all the time; "I have learnt to do without his love now, and do not want it given back to me. If he came and laid it here at my feet I would not stoop to pick it up."

The visitor seated opposite to her was Miss Selwyn, now, thanks to Mrs. Thorne's liberality, a rich woman. But Mrs. Thorne's will, together with her wealth, had bequeathed her many responsibilities. "Care

is the shadow of possession." Perhaps it is well for Lucy that so it is; anxiety and responsibility conjoined may help to free her from the load of tragic sorrow she has bent under for many a day past.

Her eyes looked sorrowful remonstrance to Edie's.

"I feel so miserably guilty," she murmured; "from beginning to end it was all my fault."

"I forgave you," answered Edie, though it was coldly enough said. "You did not know what you were doing."

"And you cannot forgive him, the one you loved so well! Oh, Miss Fairfax, is that possible?"

"Perhaps," answered Edie, "it is because I loved him so well that I find it so hard to forgive him—in the way you mean."

"If you had seen him as I saw him the other day when we met in London, so white, so forlorn-looking, I do not think you could prevent yourself forgiving him."

Edie made a sharp, impatient movement with her hand, as though she would like to push her visitor farther away from her.

Lucy went on:

"I implored him to go and say good-bye to you before he started again. He looked broken-hearted enough, but he was like you—firm as a rock. 'I will never go to her unless she sends for me,' he said, 'and she is not likely to do that.'"

"No, I am not likely to do that," said Edie under her breath.

"Ah, if you had but seen his face as I did when he said it, you would send at once. I know if he goes away he will never come back again. I saw that in his face too."

Edie rose from her chair to end the interview.

"It is of no use pleading, Miss Selwyn; my mind is made up. If he came back here to-night, things could never be as they were between us. I am much obliged to you for the trouble you have taken in coming so far on my account."

"On your account! Oh, not only on your account," exclaimed Lucy, rising from her chair also, and facing Edie; "think what my life has been the last two years—what it must be to its very end, if I have it always on my conscience that I separated two people who loved each other truly, and were worthy of each other!"

"I am sorry that, not even to give you back your peace of mind, can I consent to marry Mr. Wickham," answered Edie coldly and proudly.

Lucy looked at her long and searchingly.

"Do you mind answering one question, Miss Fairfax?" she said at length. "Do you think honestly, in your heart of hearts, that Mr. Wickham has wronged you more deeply than Ellinor Yorke wronged me?"

"I do not see what that has to do with the matter."

"Not much, only I wanted to say how hard I found it to forgive her, how hard I had to fight every day with my own heart. Just think the terrible misery she brought on me, on Mrs. Thorne, on Rodney. At one time it seemed as though, if my own salvation depended on it, I could not forgive her. And then, one day, just as Mrs. Thorne lay dying, the awfulness of going out of the world with a hard, unforgiving heart came suddenly upon me. I took Mrs. Thorne's hand in mine and knelt down by her side. 'I want you to pray with me that Ellinor Yorke may be forgiven,' I said, and then I prayed aloud for Ellinor, with her hand between mine. She did not make any sign; I do not know whether she understood me; but she died thus with her hand in mine while I prayed aloud for Ellinor."

Eddie was touched.

"Perhaps," she said in a low voice, "in my heart I have forgiven Phil, but I cannot forget, and, because I must remember everything to my dying day, we two must be forever apart."

"But why try to forget? Remember everything if you like; I cannot forget. I know my life must be a marred, broken thing to its very end, but that is not to say I am not to do the best I can with it—mend it as well as I can and make the most of it."

"I may patch my life also—some day—but not in the way you mean," answered Eddie as decisively as before.

Then other visitors were announced, and Lucy, letting her veil fall hurriedly over her face, withdrew, her heart so heavy she was scarcely able to articulate her good-bye.

Eddie was very silent at dinner that night. Lucy's words, not a doubt, had had a certain effect on her. When she took her work, and went with Mrs. Rumsey into the library, the whist-table looked very desolate with Colonel Wickham and her father seated as partners, and a dummy spread out in front of the vicar.

"To think I'm reduced to this," groaned the Squire, giving a vicious look at the dummy; "and Phil always played such a splendid game!"

This had been his grumble all the way

home, to think that when he got there he should be reduced to a dummy at whist!

Eddie, however, had found a ready means of silencing him by suggesting Mrs. Rumsey as a fourth in the game.

To-night the words have escaped him unawares. Eddie turned her head significantly towards the corner where sat Mrs. Rumsey with her knitting-pins. The Squire at once pulled in his horns, adding in loud and somewhat apologetic tones:

"Not but what one can throw a good deal of science even into dummy, if one sets one's mind to it."

"Diamonds, diamonds, diamonds! Nothing but diamonds!" said the vicar, laying out his dummy. "Here's a suit long enough to be a chancery suit—eh, Squire?"

"Charlie loves a joke," chimed Mrs. Rumsey, clearing her throat and making her knitting-pins fly.

Eddie sat still in her corner saying not a word. It was all so like old times—yet ah, so different! There seemed to come a mist before her eyes, and Lucy's words, like some dreary funeral bell, seemed to repeat themselves in her ear, "If he goes he will never come back—never come back—never come back!"

She could not sit still. Laying down her work, she muttered an excuse to Mrs. Rumsey, wandered out into the hall, and stood staring through the window there into the garden, thinking all sorts of sad, sweet thoughts of "the days that were no more."

Although far on in November, the night was warm, as November's nights so often are. There was a full moon overhead; the sky was a very mosaic of stars. In the garden every laurel-leaf, every birch-twigg, seemed literally dripping with moonlight. It lay in ridges on the distant hills; in the near distance it outlined every skeleton tree and leafless bush, and transformed the little shrubbery of hazel-rods, with their tenantless swinging nests, and briary tangle beneath, into a sort of mystic jungle that might have been transported intact from dreamland itself.

"Ah, that shrubbery!" thought Eddie. "What sweet, delicious, miserable hours have been spent there! What stories those hazel-rods might tell!"

And then somehow, almost mechanically, without any distinct reason for so doing in her mind, she tied her pocket-handkerchief round her throat, opened the hall-door, and went wandering out into the moonlight.

Straight down the sloping path towards the shrubbery she went, as though she were

bent on making those hazel-rods tell her over again the story of the sweet whispered words and promises they had so often listened to, her head drooping a little with its weight of thought, her hands folded, her eyes downcast to the pebbly path which, in the transfiguring silver light, seemed literally paved and tessellated with precious jewels.

Suddenly she starts and retreats a step, for across the shining pebbles has fallen a long, dark shadow—that of a man with slouch hat drawn low over his brows. She looks up to see the man himself leaning over the rustic gate, and she knows in a moment who he is.

"Phil!" "Edie!" are the words that start from their lips simultaneously, and then they stand still, dumbly staring at each other.

Phil finds his voice first, though it is an odd, shaking one:

"I beg your pardon, Edie; I did not think—how could I!—you would be wandering out here at this time of night—I would not for worlds have forced myself on you."

Edie stands still and says nothing.

"I longed so to see the old place before I went back again," he goes on even more apologetically and nervously than before. "I felt I must look up at your windows and say my good-bye to them. No one knows I am here; I have not been home, I shall not go home; I shall go back straight to the station and take train to Southampton—"

But still not a word from Edie. She stands motionless where she was, about a yard from the gate he leans over. Only her eyes are fixed on his face now instead of on the pebbles at her feet.

Phil waits a moment and then goes on again:

"It seems almost like a dream, my coming here and you to be coming down the path straight towards me. I had said to myself, not a moment before, 'I would give my life to have Edie come to me now, this very moment, put her hand in mine, and say, 'Phil, I forgive you!' And that very moment you came—though not with those words on your lips. I dare not ask for them."

Edie draws one step nearer to him. But she does not put her hand in his.

"Phil, I forgive you," she says in low, almost solemn tones.

"Thank you, Edie," he says brokenly.

"Now I shall go away with a quieter mind. It is good of you. Of course you will never know all—I couldn't explain—it would take years to tell you—you couldn't understand if you were told. Good-bye, God bless you, Edie! Will you shake hands? Do you mind very much?"

"Here's the hall-door open; she's out in the garden—the child will catch her death of cold!" exclaimed Mrs. Rumsey huskily.

"Edie, Edie!" cried the Squire, peering out into the moonlight; "where on earth have you got to? Asthma, ague, bronchitis, gout, lumbago, and no end of nice things begin with moonlight walks."

But the Colonel was the first to find his way to the rustic gate.

Evidently the shaking hands had taken some little time, for Phil's and Edie's fingers were yet clasping each other's.

"Thank God!" said the Colonel, not lightly but devoutly. "Ah, Edie, I see you have learnt the sweet old lesson the Christmas bells will soon be ringing out—how that when the gulf between heaven and earth was blackest and deepest, One came and threw a bridge across it."

"What! Phil there!" shouted the Squire lustily from the other end of the path. "Well, now we've got you we'll keep you, my boy. Didn't I tell you, Wickham, that I was certain it would all come right between those young people if they could only see each other face to face for five minutes! Give three cheers and say good-bye to the Australian business. Of course that's knocked on the head now. Come into the house at once."

"If Edie asks me I will come, not without," said Phil in a voice so low that it sounded like the echo of his own.

And Edie's answer to this was a sweet upward look into his face, a soft "Come in, Phil," while with her left hand—her right was still in his possession—she unlatched the little gate and held it open for him to pass through.

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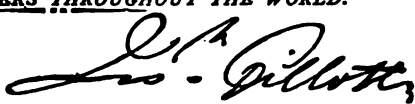


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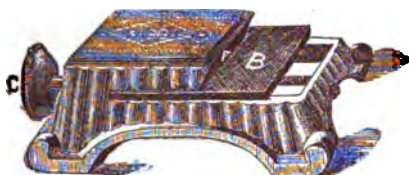
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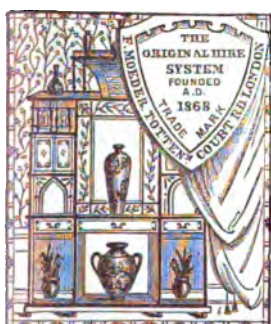
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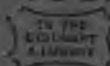
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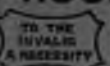
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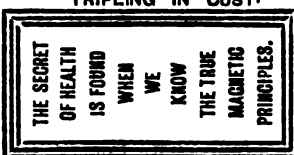
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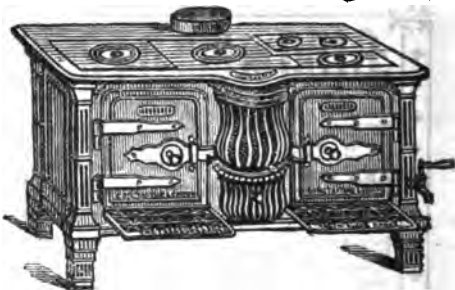
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### CHAPTER X.

NETTA HEARD had been to see her cousins—a circumstance that occurred so frequently that it would be hardly worth mentioning, if Daniel had not distinguished himself by being markedly rude to her.

Phoebe was much puzzled and distressed by this new freak of his. Netta and he had hitherto been such good friends that, though both were much too young for anything like a formal engagement, all their friends had recognised it as a fact that they belonged in some sort to each other. Netta had arrived with her mind quite full of some new poem she had been reading, her delight in which she was longing to share with Daniel. He, however, scarcely waiting to hear even the name of the new poem, began to dilate on the delights of Saturday's skating expedition, and on the charms and beauties of the young lady who had organised it.

Poor Netta was quite bewildered. She was not strong-minded, trifles were very serious things to her, and she had had such faith in this cousin, that it was a great blow to her to find that he could be so much delighted by a girl who was almost a stranger to him. She listened patiently and politely as long as she could, and then, with a growing headache, rose to go, pleading fatigue as an excuse for leaving so early.

It had always been Daniel's business and pleasure to escort her home, and no one would ever have ventured to forestall him in the matter. To-night, however, when Netta came downstairs with her bonnet on, he did not move.

"Daniel," said Phoebe, "Netta wants to go."

Without rising from his seat, Daniel replied very calmly:

"Ah, good-night, Netta. Excuse my going with you to-night. I've got a cold, and I am afraid of the night air."

The tears rose into Netta's eyes, but she wouldn't let them fall, and replied as calmly:

"Pray do not disturb yourself. I can very well go alone."

Of course Luke would not allow that. He rose promptly, and, darting an indignant look at his brother, said:

"I am quite at your service, Netta, and only too delighted to be so. Please let me take you home."

"Ah!" sighed Daniel, "you are as strong as a horse, Luke. You never know what it is to be tired, or to have to take care of yourself."

Luke did his best to make up for Daniel's neglect by the most marked politeness to his cousin, but Netta, though she admired and respected him exceedingly, looked upon him as quite a middle-aged man. His company could hardly be to her what Daniel's was.

When Luke came back from his walk, he immediately sought Phoebe in the kitchen, where, as usual at that time of day, she was busily employed in washing the china and silver used at tea. She heard his footstep, and spoke without looking round:

"Ah, Luke, I am glad you've come in, dear! Will you put these things into the cupboard for me?"

"Are you very busy, Phoebe?" answered he. "I have brought a friend to see you."

"What do you mean, Luke? I cannot come upstairs for ever so long. But you are joking. I have no friends, you know."

"Allow me to contradict that statement," said a voice which made Phoebe start in astonishment. She knew to whom it

belonged, though she had heard it seldom. Few men are gifted with voices so sweet, melodious, and clear as that of Gordon Fenchurch, whom Phoebe, as she turned, saw standing beside Luke. Her tone showed that she was extremely annoyed as she said :

"Luke, you should not have brought your friend here. Pray take him to the drawing-room at once."

"Please do not banish me, Miss Carfield," said Gordon earnestly ; "I came on purpose to see you, with a message from Clarence."

"It was not right of Luke," said Phoebe sternly, though her face showed signs of relenting.

"You must not blame Luke. He would have left me in the drawing-room, and have done everything properly if I would have allowed him. But it seemed doubtful if I should see you at all, if I once got established in that realm of propriety. Besides which, I hate drawing-rooms, and I am fond of kitchens. I often visit Clarence when she is busy in ours."

"Does Clarence cook, then ?"

"To be sure. Does that surprise you ? I assure you she makes capital puddings, and cakes, and things. I see you have no idea what a useful member of society my little sister is."

Phoebe blushed suddenly, remembering how she had heard it said by the Wilton gossips that the Fenchurchs, rich as they were, were too stingy to afford themselves a good cook. And Gordon noted the sudden flush of colour, and made up his mind that, sooner or later, he would know what it had meant.

Meantime Phoebe did not leave off what she was about. She was wiping the china now with a soft, clean cloth, but not quite so quietly as usual, for her hands shook a little. She still looked rather vexed.

"Luke," said she, "you know this is not good of you. Will you not take Mr. Fenchurch upstairs ?"

"How can I help it, Phoebe ? He is quite comfortable, you see. He will stay if he wishes to."

"I am sure," said Gordon, "I will go at once if I annoy you, Miss Carfield. But why should I not stay ? It would be unkind to send me away."

There was a pathetic sadness in the sweet voice that made Phoebe look at him curiously, wondering that he should take the trouble to be sad about such a trifle. She did not know that the sadness had

been growing into his voice for years, and was more natural to it now than any other tone. However, the grave face at which she looked wore a very gentle, pleasant expression, and she felt no particularly keen desire to banish it. So she gave up her point with a quiet smile, notwithstanding a certain lingering consciousness that she was countenancing a very improper proceeding.

"Did you say you had a message for me ?" she asked presently.

She had put away the china now, and was peeling lemons to make her mother's lemonade. The young men watched idly as the long yellow curl was stripped from the lemon, and the woolly, white coat torn off, thinking, perhaps, the while, how deftly the girl's small fingers plied the knife. Gordon started as she spoke.

"A message ? Yes ; Clarence wants you to come and have tea with her on Tuesday. Will you ?"

"I am sorry." Phoebe's answer was full of real regret. "It is very kind of your sister, but, you see, I never go out."

"Never ! Miss Carfield, do you mean really ?"

"It is almost true. I do sometimes go to drink tea with my cousin, but that is all. I never went to even a small party in my life. I am sure I should feel quite strange and awkward at one."

"Perhaps. But we are not going to have a party. We very seldom do have one. You see, if we do, I have to get my sister-in-law to come over and help Clarence to entertain. But parties are stupid affairs in my opinion, not good enough entertainment for friends, though they do very well for acquaintances. On Tuesday we shall have no one but yourselves. That is, you, and your brother, and Miss Matty. You will come, will you not ?" turning to Luke.

"Can you manage it, Phoebe ?" said Luke. "I should like to go, and I think it would do you good."

Phoebe looked wistfully out of the window and thought.

"Matty shall certainly come," said she presently. "It is so good for young girls to have a little change. And I will try. I should like it. Please may I leave it uncertain whether I come or not ?"

"Oh, certainly ! But please do come, or Clarence will think it is my fault that you are absent—that I did not ask you politely, or frightened you, or something of that sort. You do not know how much she wishes for your company."

"It is very kind of her," said Phoebe gratefully.

"Did you say as I came in that you had no friends, Miss Carfield?"

"Yes. I did not mean, though, that people are unkind to me. Only that I do not know any young people intimately except my cousin Netta, and so I cannot have any friends of that sort, you know."

She spoke quite simply of the fact, as though it were natural that things should be as she had stated them. Gordon looked at her with a strong feeling of respect mingling with the pity he had felt for her since he first knew her, and with a strong desire, too, to add some pleasure to a life which seemed to him to be nearly as sad as his own had been.

"You know my sister now," said he, "and me. Will you not take us for friends?"

"I am not sure, Mr. Fenchurch. The truth is——" Phoebe blushed, but spoke out bravely. "The truth is, I do not see how we can be friends. Your sister likes coming here now for a novelty; but she would not like to come often. She is sure to find everything in a mess some day. The boys fighting, the house untidy, all of us cross—except Luke, that is; he is never cross. Then I am getting quite old now, or at least middle-aged. I do not have time to be like young people, and, in short, everything here is so different from what she is used to, that she would not like it at all."

"How do you know what my sister is used to, Miss Carfield?" asked Gordon gravely. "I think if you knew, you would say she has had more to make her old than you have."

"Perhaps," said Luke; "but the fact is, we live in a very different style from you altogether. You are rich and we are poor. This little woman and I had about made up our minds to be content with each other's society for the remainder of our lives—had we not, Phoebe?"

He had put his arm round his sister, and she leant quietly against him as though she found his shoulder a very secure and restful support.

"Very well," said Gordon bitterly. "If you will not have anything to do with us, I cannot help it. As for my being rich, I tell you my money has never been anything but a curse to me. I sold myself to get it, and I sell myself every day to keep it, and yet I must go on working for it. I suppose it is a part of the same punishment

that it is set between you and me now. And you are the only people I have seen since I came here with whom I wanted to make friends."

He turned to go, but Phoebe and Luke stepped forward with one impulse. The eyes of the girl were full of tears. Her brother said:

"Stop a moment. We did not know you were so much in earnest, Mr. Fenchurch. We did not mean to wound you."

"Of course I was in earnest," said Gordon, taking the hand Luke held out to him.

And then they were all silent for a few minutes.

Phoebe was the first to speak again.

"Then we will come to you on Tuesday. Shall we, Luke? Just for this once?"

"Thanks," said Gordon. "Then—pleasure being disposed of—we can talk of business. Part of my errand this evening was to find out if you would like that young brother of yours—Peter, is he not?—to come into our mill here, and learn the business?"

"If I would like it!" said Luke. "But you cannot be earnest, surely."

"Why not, pray? You seem to doubt my earnestness a great deal."

"It seems as though it would be almost too good news," said Phoebe. "We have been so troubled to know how to manage for Peter, and—you do not know anything about him."

"Perhaps not; but I flatter myself I am a tolerably good judge of character. Clarence likes your brother, too; she was very much pleased by something she heard him say the other day. What do you think of it, Carfield? Shall he come? Of course it will be uphill work at first. He will have to work hard, and learn all about weaving, and keep the same hours as the men. That was my father's plan with all beginners, and it is mine. But it is not really very irksome work, if you once make up your mind to it. I have been through it myself, and I will try to smooth the way for Peter. Of course it will be some time before he earns more than enough for pocket-money, but, if he turns out well, I will take care that he gets a start in life."

"I cannot hesitate for a moment," said Luke. "It is just what the boy wished for, and what I hardly thought it possible to get for him. It is a kindness that we had no right to expect at your hands, Mr. Fenchurch."

"Nonsense—nonsense! I only wish I

were sure that I am doing the boy a kindness. I would never urge anyone to go into business. Only, if he must do so——"

"He must," said Luke; "there is no doubt about that."

"Then he may as well come where he will have a good chance as anywhere else."

"Why do you think business so dreadful, Mr. Fenchurch?" asked Phoebe anxiously. "Is it because of the temptations?"

"Partly. But do not be afraid, Miss Carfield. I will not put temptation in Peter's way. Things shall never be as hard for him as they have been for me. And now, good-night."

Phoebe gave him her hand, was conscious that he shook hands pleasantly, and he was gone. She stood still with one foot on the fender, and looked at the fire. She was excited as she had not been since she was a little child. She felt as though she had been doing wrong in promising to go out, and yet—how pleasant it would be! She was sure it was wrong to let Mr. Fenchurch stay there and talk to her; but how much she had enjoyed it! What a gentle, quiet manner he had, and how good he looked! Was he good, though? What did he mean by saying that he had sold himself! And how odd of him to talk so to her and Luke, who were almost strangers to him! Phoebe was aware of a very strong desire that he might prove to be really very good and nice. So ran her meditations until Luke came back to her.

"It is ten o'clock," said he. "The folks upstairs are going to bed. Go and say good-night, dear, and then come back and talk to me. Will you?"

Phoebe went, and in a few minutes rejoined her brother.

"This is a great weight lifted off our shoulders, dear," said he.

"Yes, indeed. I wonder why they should be so kind to us, Luke?"

"Because they are downright good people," said he emphatically. "I shall feel quite easy about Peter now. No fear but that that boy will go straight if he only gets a start. I only wish that other hopeful young brother of ours would do likewise. I am afraid he means to get into trouble."

"Daniel? Oh, Luke! How!"

"How?" said he. "Can you not see that he has fallen headlong into love with Miss Fenchurch?"

"Luke, how absurd! Besides, if he has, what harm will it do him?"

"Do you suppose she would have anything to say to him?"

"No. She would only laugh at him. But really I cannot imagine Daniel's being sufficiently in love with anyone but himself to take a refusal much to heart, and I do not think it would do him any harm to be laughed at. Besides, Luke, he really is as good as engaged to Netta, you know. He would have spoken to her, but uncle would not allow it before he was twenty-one."

"Poor little Netta! A good riddance for her. He will never speak to her now."

"He cannot think he has a chance of winning Miss Fenchurch."

"Wait and see. He has conceit enough for anything, and, mark my words, Phoebe, if he proposes and is rejected, we shall have a great deal of trouble with him. He is just the sort of fellow to get himself entangled in what he would call 'the meshes of a hopeless passion,' and to give vent to his feelings by doing something ridiculous."

"Oh, Luke, I hope not."

Phoebe's pretty face looked so troubled, and such an anxious frown knit her brow, that Luke felt remorseful for his words.

"Wait and see, little sister," said he. "Clarence Fenchurch is not the girl I take her for, if she gives him any encouragement, and, perhaps, if she snubs him, he will return quietly to his old love. Wait and see."

"Ah yes," echoed Phoebe. "We will wait and see, dear. Somehow I cannot help thinking that things will turn out all right."

#### CURIOSITIES OF TAXATION.

THERE is, no doubt, even to this day, something distasteful about the word taxation, and the fount of human kindness seems incontinently to dry up whenever a tax-gatherer heaves in sight. All recognise taxes to be indispensable to our comfort and safety as citizens, but we do not love them; we admit that the tax-gatherer is a necessary evil, but most of us would always rather have his room than his company. Would taxes be any more pleasant or easier to pay if we called them benefactions, or subscriptions, or contributions? It is more than doubtful; but, at the same time, let it not be forgotten that it has been contended that the severance of the American colonies from the mother country would never have occurred, had our statesmen been diplomatic enough to style the

obnoxious dues "regulations," instead of taxation.

There is, no doubt, a good deal in a name, and if, as Wood says, Eastern potentates prefer to call the tolls which have to be paid to the Arab chiefs by the bands of pilgrims to Mecca, backsheesh, or gratuities, one can understand their feeling, notwithstanding that the said Arab chiefs call the same tolls, taxes. One of the conditions upon which Louis the Eleventh of France bought peace from England was the payment of fifty thousand crowns annually to the English king, and certain annual sums to the English ministers. English historians call these payments tributes, but French historians call them gifts. Our own Kings, too, had an innocent belief that a thing hateful in itself might be made less hateful by its name, and therefore, in kindly consideration for the feelings of their subjects, they often described taxes as "benevolences" and "loans." Charles the First tried hard to work the "benevolence" trick, but it had been pretty well played out by his time.

Burke has recorded that all "the great contests for freedom in this country were from the earliest times chiefly upon the question of taxation. . . . On this point of taxes the ablest pens and most eloquent tongues have been exercised—the greatest spirits have acted and suffered." From which we may conclude that the euphemistic efforts of our rulers have not been very successful, and that upon the whole it is as desirable to style a national impost a tax, as it is to call a spade a spade.

We have no record of taxation among the Ancient Britons, but it may be assumed that when the chiefs were in need of anything they simply demanded it from their followers, although they probably preferred to steal it from some rival chief or clan. But when the Romans came, taxes were levied to provide for the expenses of the conquered province. These taxes must obviously have been paid generally, if not entirely, in kind, because coin was scarce among our forefathers, and the blessing of a paper currency was then unheard of. One-tenth of the produce of the land, was a favourite method of exaction by the Romans, but they levied poll-taxes upon the flocks and herds as well as upon individuals. And even in these early days we find that the taxes were paid with grumbling and collected with difficulty.

In the Anglo-Saxon period we do not

find much about regular taxes until the several kingdoms merged into one, and then we read that the King received a contribution from every shire, which was called the "feorum fultum." Afterwards, in war times, taxes were imposed (in the form of gross-levies) by the "Witenagemot" upon the shires, which had to contribute ships and equipments in proportion to their populations. This was the famous "Shippgeld." Still later, when money was needed to buy off the Danish invaders, another tax called the "Danegeld" was imposed. This was levied upon the land and ranged from one shilling to four shillings per hide, or one hundred and twenty acres. This tax yielded ten thousand pounds in 991; twenty-four thousand pounds in 1002; thirty-six thousand pounds in 1007; forty-eight thousand pounds in 1012; and seventy-two thousand pounds in 1018. Long after the fear of the Danes disappeared this tax was retained, but it was very unpopular, and led to a revolt in Worcestershire in 1041, and the subsequent spoliation of the city of Worcester by the King's orders. Edward the Confessor repealed this tax, but it was instituted again by the Norman Kings. Another tax invented by the Anglo-Saxons and revived by the Normans, was the Fumage, or smoke-tax. It was levied upon every hearth in the country with the exception of the poor.

For some time after the Norman Conquest there was no change in the methods of taxation, and the King maintained his state upon the produce of the royal demesne, which included not only the lands of the deposed Saxon Kings, but also the confiscated lands of the nobles who revolted against the Normans. According to the Domesday Book, it comprised in 1086 no fewer than one thousand four hundred and twenty-two manors, besides farms in Middlesex and Shropshire. Besides their rents, the tenants of the royal demesne were under obligation to assist in extraordinary expenses of war, and for such purposes were liable to taxation to the extent of one tenth of their gear. Upon others, taxation took curious forms. They had to provide horses and carriages for the conveyance of the King and his suite. They were compelled to furnish necessaries for the Royal Household at prices fixed for, not by, them. And every cargo of wine had to pay the King either one or two casks, according to the size of the shipment.

With the institution of the feudal system, taxation grew considerably. The nobles had not only to give personal service for forty days every year, but they had also to give the service of the knights who held under them, and they had, further, to pay fees to the King when their sons were knighted, their daughters married, and so forth. On the death of a feudal chief, the King took possession of the estates until the heir appeared to do homage, and deducted a year's profits before transferring the property. If the next heir were a girl, so much the better, for the King could allocate her as wife to anyone who would give sufficient consideration, which often took the form of a substantial sum of money. This was the *maritagium*, or right of bestowal in marriage, and it must have been a profitable source of revenue, for, if the heiress married without the royal consent, a fine was imposed of "double the value of the marriage." The Exchequer Rolls give some curious instances of the operation of this law. One Walter de Cancey paid fifteen pounds for the privilege of marrying when and whom he pleased. A certain lady of Ipswich paid four pounds and a silver mark for permission to marry "her own love," and several other ladies paid for the same privilege. One Geoffrey de Mandevill paid the King twenty thousand marks for permission to marry Isabell, Countess of Gloucester.

Besides the right to all waifs and strays, the flotsam and jetsam of the coasts, treasure-trove, and the profits in return for the custody of the lands of imbeciles, the King received fees for granting charters to towns and guilds, and liberty to form markets, fairs, parks, and monopolies. Sometimes these fees or fines were paid in money, as when the Londoners paid King Stephen a hundred silver marks for leave to choose their own sheriffs. York paid Henry the Third two hundred marks for burgess liberties; the vintners of Hereford paid forty shillings for permission "to sell a sesterium of wine for tenpence for the space of a year," and so on. Sometimes the fine was paid in kind, as when the Bishop of Salisbury gave a palfrey for permission to hold a market, and one Peter de Goldington gave a hawk for permission to make a park on his land at Stokes. We even find a record of a fine of two hundred hens being paid by a wife for leave to rejoin her husband; of five marks by one for leave to rise from a

sick-bed; and of a tun of wine paid by a bishop for forgetting to remind King John about "a girdle for the Countess of Albemarle"!

It was in the reign of Henry the Second that feudatory service was commuted into money payments. The tax was called "*scutage*," and was at the rate of one pound six shillings and eightpence on every knight's fee of twenty pounds annual value. But in this reign also was instituted a sort of Income and Property Tax, for before proceeding to the Crusade, Henry decreed that everyone should "give in alms" the tenth of his rents and moveables. Knights were exempted in respect of their arms, horses, and accoutrements; and the clergy in respect of their vestments, books, clothing, and church furniture. Complete exemption was afforded to both knights and clergy who "took the cross." But besides this, frequent tallage, as taxing of the demesne tenants was called, was resorted to for the expenses in the Holy Land, and the citizens of London especially were mulcted severely under this head. The Londoners rebelled more than once, but tallage did not cease until 1332, when it was superseded by a general tax on moveables sanctioned by Parliament.

The Jews were a good source of profit to our old Kings before they were expelled by decree in 1290. Henry the Second exacted from them one year a fourth part of their chattels. John imprisoned all he could lay hands on, and drained them of sixty-six thousand marks. Henry the Third imposed a special fine of twenty thousand marks in addition to a tallage of sixty thousand marks, arresting their persons and those of their wives and children, and seizing all their lands and chattels in default of payment. There were special functionaries for the Jew department of the revenue, and seeing that it was so lucrative one wonders at the decree of expulsion. But, formally expelled by Edward the First, the Jews were not allowed to settle again in England until the time of Cromwell.

The Plantagenets instituted some curious taxes. One, in 1377, agreed to by Parliament, was a tax of "fourpence to be taken from the goods of each person in the kingdom, men and women, over the age of fourteen years, except only beggars." This was the "*Tallage of Groats*," and it yielded twenty-two thousand six hundred and seven pounds, two shillings and eightpence, from

one million three hundred and seventy-six thousand four hundred and forty-two lay persons, the return not including Chester and Durham, which kept separate accounts. This tallage of groats was afterwards superseded by a poll-tax, graduated according to ranks and means. Thus Dukes were taxed ten marks each; Earls and Countesses, six marks; Barons, Bannerets, and Knights, and their widows, three marks; knights-bachelors and esquires, a mark and a half; small esquires and merchants, a mark; and esquires without land and in professional service, three shillings and fourpence. Judges were taxed at five pounds each; serjeants-at-law, two pounds; lower legal dignitaries, one pound; and attorneys, six shillings and eightpence. The regulations for other ranks are interesting. The Mayor of London was ranked as an Earl, and had to pay accordingly. A London alderman had to pay two pounds, like a Baron, and provincial mayors of large towns were rated in the same category. Small mayors ranged from one pound down to six shillings and eightpence. Large merchants had to pay one pound, like the knights-bachelors, and "substantial merchants, thirteen shillings and fourpence"; while shopkeepers, artisans, etc., ranged from two shillings down to sixpence each. Farmers and cattle-dealers paid from two shillings to one shilling; innkeepers, not also merchants, according to importance, three shillings and fourpence down to one shilling; and for those not coming under any of the above classes, "every married man, for himself and his wife, and every man and woman sole, over the age of sixteen years, except real beggars, fourpence." The clergy did not escape this burden. Thus the Archbishop of Canterbury was rated at ten marks—six pounds thirteen shillings and fourpence; Bishops and mitred abbots, at four pounds; beneficed clergymen, according to their benefices, from three pounds down to two shillings; monks and nuns, according to the value of their order, three shillings and fourpence down to fourpence; and clerks, fourpence.

This tax did not yield as much as was expected, and in 1380 the Government was so "hard up" that the army was over a year in arrears of pay, the King was over head and ears in debt, and the Crown jewels were in pawn. Therefore, another tax was levied of "three groats from every lay person in the kingdom, male or female, of whatever estate or condition in life." This tax was ordered with the provision

that the strong should help the weak, but no man of means was to pay more than sixty groats, or twenty shillings, and no one less than twopence. This was what led to the peasant insurrection, in which Wat Tyler figured.

We pass over the several impositions of Fifteenths, and Tenths, and Two-fifteenths, and several forms of land tax, because the history of the land tax would need a chapter to itself. In 1427, we find a new tax invented—one upon the houses of the people—which ranged from two shillings to thirteen shillings and fourpence per householder, according to the rateable value of the parish church. In 1435, a graduated Income Tax was devised, beginning at two shillings and sixpence for five pounds clear income from property, and rising by sixpence for every pound up to one hundred pounds; from one hundred pounds to four hundred pounds, eightpence for every pound over one hundred pounds; and over four hundred pounds, two shillings in the pound. The imposition of this tax was very unpopular, and led to many disturbances.

The taxes we have so far mentioned were all apart from Customs dues upon imports and exports. But in the reign of Edward the Third was imposed an export duty on wool, which was virtually a tax upon farmers and wool-staplers. It was originally on the basis of two pounds per sack when the exporter was a Briton, and three pounds per sack when a foreigner. Then followed an export tax on cloths, which was fourteenpence for the quantity made from a sack of wool, from domestic merchants, and twenty-one pence from foreign merchants. The wool-tax was yielding sixty thousand pounds a year, when an outcry was raised against it in 1348. After some changes, the tax was fixed, in 1362, at twenty shillings the sack, and at the same time an export tax of forty shillings the last was imposed on leather. In the same reign, existing irregular imposts on wine and other merchandise were regulated by Parliament. The tax on wine was made two shillings per tun, and a tax of sixpence in the pound was imposed on all exports, excluding wool and leather, already described as taxed specially. These taxes expired in 1372, but were renewed and varied subsequently, and may be traced under different forms down to the time of the Tudors, and received some additions from them. Thus Henry the Seventh imposed a special duty of eighteen shillings the butt on



Malmsey wine imported from the Island of Crete. This is interesting as the first instance of a retaliatory duty, the alleged reason being that the Venetians had imposed duties on merchandise coming from Great Britain. Mary, again, laid a duty of forty shillings the tun on French wines, and also devised taxes on the exports of "short cloth," to check evasions of the tax on wool. Queen Elizabeth was even smarter in counteracting the frauds which were committed in the Customs Department, and compelled one Sir Thomas Smith to disgorge a considerable plunder. The consequence was that the revenue from these taxes doubled itself in a year or two, and thereafter rapidly increased.

One of the curiosities of old taxation was the impost on foreigners. In the time of the Plantagenets we find that foreigners resident in this country, besides paying double the ordinary rates of general taxation, had to pay the following alien poll-taxes: Merchant strangers, permanently resident, forty shillings; ditto, temporarily resident, twenty shillings; others not merchants, six shillings and eightpence; brewers, twenty shillings.

The Plantagenets also raised money on the "benevolence" principle—literally appeals to the charity of their subjects. Edward the Fourth, being very handsome, was remarkably successful at this method of extortion, particularly with the fair sex. It is related that one rich widow, captivated by his good looks, tabled twenty pounds with a good grace. The King was so pleased that he kissed her, and the lady immediately doubled her benevolence, "because she esteemed the kiss of a King so precious a jewel." Queen Elizabeth also raised a great deal of money by appeals to the "benevolence" of her subjects. It is related that on one occasion the Mayor of Coventry brought her a handsome well-filled purse, when the Queen remarked: "I have few such gifts, Mr. Mayor; it is a hundred pounds in gold." "Please, your grace," said the mayor, "it is a great deal more we give you." "What is that?" said the Queen. "It is the hearts of your loving subjects," replied the mayor. To which the Queen rejoined: "We thank you, Mr. Mayor. That is a great deal more indeed."

The system of "monopolies" was much resorted to in Elizabeth's time, when, in return for money payments, monopolies were granted to various persons for the manufacture of glass, wire, paper, etc., and for other purposes, for a certain term of years.

The most grievous monopoly of all was that for the manufacture and sale of salt, and this bore so heavily on the people, that it led to the abolition of most of the patents. Under the Stuarts again, however, there was a great increase in the number of monopolists, so much so that in 1640 Culpepper said: "These men, like the frogs of Egypt, have gotten possession of our dwellings, and we have scarce a room free from them. They sup in our cup, they dip in our dish, they sit by our fire, we find them in the dye-vat, the wash-bowls, and the powdering-tub; they share with the butler in his box, they have marked and sealed us from head to foot. One instance of a monopoly is as much as we have space for. Soap-boiling was restricted to a corporation, who paid King Charles the First ten thousand pounds for the patent, and eight pounds per ton on all the soap manufactured. Of course the consumers had to pay for all this.

James the First instituted another mode of raising the wind, which, although hardly coming under the head of taxation, is worth noticing. He put up honours for sale, and fixed the following prices: For an Earldom, twenty thousand pounds; a Viscounty, fifteen thousand pounds; a Barony, ten thousand pounds; a Baronetcy, one thousand and ninety-five pounds. The sole condition was that the purchaser should be of sufficient worldly position to maintain the dignity of the rank purchased.

Among the ingenious devices of the Stuarts for raising money, was the famous "Ship-money" of the first Charles. Writs were issued to all the counties—inland as well as maritime, and to the principal cities and towns—specifying a certain tonnage of ships required, ostensibly for the navy, for which the assessment of the contributories was at the rate of ten pounds per ton. As it was really the money, and not the ships, that was wanted, the iniquitous character of the impost was not long in producing discontent. The tax was repealed by the Long Parliament.

We have referred to various forms of poll-taxes. The first most definite form of this kind of impost was the tallage of groats, of Edward the Third, and we have seen some later examples. It crops up again in 1641, when, to meet pressing needs, an impost of one hundred pounds for a Duke; eighty pounds for a Marquess; sixty pounds for an Earl; forty pounds for a Baron and Viscount; thirty pounds for a Knight; ten pounds for an

Esquire; five pounds for every gentleman spending one hundred pounds per annum; and so on down to sixpence for the poorest labourer. In Charles the Second's reign a poll-tax was also tried several times, but with ill results; but again, after the Revolution of 1688, it was once more resorted to. Thus, in 1689, two hundred and eighty-eight thousand pounds were raised by a poll-tax; in 1690, two hundred and thirty-nine thousand nine hundred and fifty pounds; in 1692, five hundred and seventy-nine thousand pounds; in 1694, four hundred and eighty-six thousand three hundred and twenty pounds; in 1697, six hundred and twelve thousand nine hundred pounds. In the last-named year, the tax took a new form—it was at the rate of one penny per week upon all persons, except paupers, and excepting, also, domestic servants, who were assessed according to their wages. The last poll-tax was imposed in 1698, but survivals of the practice have been seen even in recent times, as, says Mr. Dowell, "in Pitt's taxes on shopkeepers, and on persons keeping saddle-horses, Pelham's tax on persons keeping coaches or carriages, the taxes on hackney-coaches and stage-coaches, and the annual licence-duties on attorneys and proctors."\*

The tax on shopkeepers, devised by Pitt, was based on the rental: thus, sixpence in the pound on rents from five pounds to ten pounds; one shilling in the pound from ten pounds to fifteen pounds; one shilling and sixpence in the pound from fifteen pounds to twenty pounds; one shilling and ninepence in the pound from twenty pounds to twenty-five pounds; and two shillings in the pound on rents over twenty-five pounds. These rates were afterwards reduced. The tax was neither popular nor productive, and was finally repealed, in 1789, by the efforts of Fox.

We can only briefly indicate other curiosities of taxation under the Pitt administration, some of which survived for a considerable time. Solicitors, attorneys, and notaries had to take out licenses, for which five pounds was charged for London and Edinburgh, three pounds for other parts of Great Britain. These rates were afterwards doubled. Conveyancers and special pleaders were taxed at first at ten pounds for London and Edinburgh, and six pounds for the country, which rates were afterwards raised to twelve pounds and eight pounds. At the present time,

although no tax is levied for practice at the bar, admission to one of the Inns of Court necessitates payment of stamp-duty of twenty-five pounds, and a call to the bar involves a stamp-duty of fifty pounds. Other licensed trades or professions are bankers, auctioneers, valuers and appraisers, house-agents, pawnbrokers, pedlars, carriage-hirers, and the existing imposts on these may be regarded as the last surviving relics of the ancient and obnoxious poll-tax.

The present house-tax may be regarded as a modernised version of the old fumage or smoke-tax of the Anglo-Saxons, which reappeared in the days of Charles the Second in the form of a tax of two shillings on every hearth and stove, levied upon the occupier. This tax was repealed by William the Third, but only to be replaced a few years later by one on every inhabited house according to the number of its windows. This was the origin of the window-tax, the remnant of which many of us—not old—can well remember. William's tax was two shillings for every house of ten windows; six shillings from ten to twenty windows, and ten shillings over twenty windows. After the Union this tax was extended to Scotland, with some modifications. The consequence of this tax was that people reduced the number of windows in their houses by closing up all that were not absolutely necessary. In 1747 it was thought to prevent the loss to revenue from these evasions, by recasting the tax and separating it from the house-duty. The rate then became sixpence on every window up to fourteen; ninepence each from fifteen to nineteen, and one shilling each from twenty windows upwards. It was also sharply defined what was meant by "a window." The division of a frame of twelve inches in one sash made two windows in the eyes of the tax-gatherer, and also a window lighting two rooms was called two windows. A penalty was imposed upon those who blocked up a window until the assessment was made with the intention of reopening it afterwards. Various alterations were made in this tax from time to time, but it was not repealed until 1851, and many of us can still recollect the flood of light which was let into darkened places by the consequent removal of boardings and plaster. It is interesting to note that this abominable tax on light and air yielded as much as one million seven hundred and eight thousand five hundred pounds in the last year of its reign.

Among other curious taxes of our

\* History of Taxation and Taxes in England. By Stephen Dowell (Longmans and Co.).

fiscal history was the tax on silver-plate. In the olden times the comprehensive tax on "moveables" covered this luxury; but a separate tax on persons using silver-plate was first imposed in 1747. It remained in force for twenty years; it never yielded very much, and it was always vexatious to the people and troublesome to assess and collect. The tax on male servants was first imposed in 1777, and was at the rate of twenty-one shillings each servant, but in 1785 Pitt arranged a progressive scale by which the tax rose in proportion to the number of servants kept up to four pounds five shillings each. A further advance during the Peninsular War brought the maximum up to nine pounds thirteen shillings each, this extreme rate being payable by bachelors who kept eleven servants or more. The high rates continued till 1823, and were then reduced one half. In 1853 Mr. Gladstone returned to the original charge of twenty-one shillings for each male servant over eighteen years of age, with ten shillings and sixpence for servants under that age, and under-keepers and under-gardeners. In 1869 the distinctions were abolished, and a uniform rate of fifteen shillings for each male servant irrespective of age was adopted. In 1873 waiters were exempted, and in 1876 the tax was further rearranged on the basis which it now occupies. A tax on female servants was imposed by Pitt in 1785, and lasted for six years, notwithstanding much opposition and a great deal of ridicule cast on its framer. The charge ranged from two shillings and sixpence to ten shillings each, according to the number kept. The tax on hair-powder was another of Pitt's financial works. It was one guinea for each person using powder, with "reduction for quantity" in the cases of large families of ladies. At first it realised about two hundred thousand pounds per annum, but the imposition had naturally the effect of changing the fashion, so that it fell off year by year until, when repealed in 1869, it was only producing one thousand pounds per annum.

Yet another instance of Pitt's inexhaustible resource in fiscal exactions was the duty on clocks and watches. This was payable by the owners at the rate of five shillings for every clock, ten shillings for every gold watch, and two shillings and sixpence for every silver watch in use. Makers and dealers had to pay annual licences besides. This tax was a failure, and as it threatened to destroy an im-

portant industry, it was cancelled in about a year, and has never been reimposed in any form. As an item of interest in this connection it may be mentioned that from a letter of Horace Walpole's, it appears that the cost of a first-class gold watch in 1759 was one hundred and thirty-four guineas, while the seals cost sixteen guineas more. The tax on armorial bearings also owes its origin to Pitt, and has continued, with alterations, to our time; its yield in 1883 being seventy-eight thousand seven hundred pounds.

It were too long a story to detail here all the experiments which have been made in taxing eatables and drinkables—coal and timber, bricks and tiles, candles, paper, bottles, playing-cards and dice, newspapers, advertisements, starch, tooth-powder, hats, gloves, and a host of other subjects. In fact, after the great French war, there seemed nothing sacred from the tax-gatherer's lynx-eye. Even plum-puddings were taxed, and it is said that "the favourite currant-dumplings of the lower classes produced two hundred and eighty thousand pounds" to the revenue! But for fuller information about these matters the reader can consult the exhaustive work of Mr. Dowell which we have mentioned above, and to which we have been largely indebted in preparing this article.

## CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

### HAMPSHIRE.

THERE is something bare and gaunt about the aspect of Hampshire, as you approach Winchester from the east. The little towns that lie in the hollows of the downs seem hardly sufficiently sheltered from the chill winds; and the whitewashed cottages, with their thatched roofs all green with fern and lichen, do not give an idea of warmth and comfort. But Winchester itself is bright looking and attractive, with its quaint high-street all on the slope, with an arched gateway at the top, and a handsome old market-cross, and a pleasant piazza that recalls somehow the rows of Chester—as they would be if the streets were filled up to their level. Then a dive through a mysterious-looking passage under the old houses leads to the cathedral and its close, and the public walk called the Slype, which cuts off part of one of the buttresses of the cathedral, while a quaint anagrammatic inscription directs the way that the precator and viator respectively are to take. And

what with cathedral dignitaries, and the officers from the barracks, and the country people who have driven in for shopping, there is a pleasant kind of stir in the old streets that marks the place as a provincial capital. But then there is not very much of it; from the high-street itself you catch a glimpse of the green hills, and it seems but a step from the market-cross, to foot-paths, and stiles, and the green fields.

And yet Winchester at one time took rank as the chief city of England, and its suburbs stretched far and wide in all directions, although the walls the Romans built confined the municipal city within pretty much its present limits; but those limits containing the royal palace, the King's castle, and the stronghold of the Bishop, with the guildhall, the cathedral, and three royal monasteries.

In its early history Winchester is clearly identified with the Venta Belgarum of the Roman Itinerary, the chief seat, doubtless, of the power of the Belgic Celts who once held this wild open region. It may have been the *Caer Gwent* of the Britons, and the scene of some of the half-fabulous Arthurian legends. Anyhow the West Saxon chiefs, the descendants of Cerdic, made the place their principal seat, and, rising with their power, the city witnessed within its walls the hallowing of Egbert as the first King of All England. It is significant, too, that here was established the earliest Guild Merchant of which there is any authentic record, perhaps even then rather a revival than an original foundation, the gathering together of customs and rules that had existed in one form or another from the date of the Roman municipality.

In the history of Winchester, even in Saxon times, the Bishop takes a high place. There is St. Swithin, best known of all the Saxon saints, a veritable historical figure, and even his attributes in connection with the weather are evidence of the strong popular veneration for his character. But under the Norman Kings the Bishop was the lord of the land. He had ten or a dozen castles in various parts of his diocese, and in Winchester itself over against the royal castle rose the embattled towers of Wolvesley. Eminent among the fighting Churohmen of the age was Henry of Blois, the brother of Stephen of that ilk, who defended his brother's cause to such effect that he laid half the town in ruins. And so hard-bested was Matilda, the Empress, in the royal castle, that she was forced, so

say some of the chroniclers, to make her escape in the form of a corpse duly lapped in lead and carried upon a bier. Matilda's chief distinction seems to have been in the way of making wonderful escapes. But in some way or other, no doubt Matilda did get away from the beleaguered castle, while her half-brother and chief supporter, Robert of Gloucester, who had held the fort till she escaped, was less fortunate. He tried to cut his way through the Bishop's forces, but was taken prisoner, and thus at Winchester was redressed the balance that had gone so heavily against Stephen at Lincoln, where, it will be remembered, he was defeated and taken prisoner. Now Robert of Gloucester was a fair set-off against Stephen, and so the exchange was effected, and the war went on again.

As long as the Norman Kings retained their hold on Normandy, Winchester remained practically the seat of government, where the royal courts were held and the great seal was kept in charge. Of all the royal seats it was the most convenient for communicating with Normandy. As far as Winchester itself, the royal galleys might be brought, and Southampton was within easy reach, which has for ages been the favourite point of departure for the Norman seaboard. From his palace at Winchester to his palace at Rouen was a passage that with favouring wind and tides could be performed by the descendant of the vikings within twenty-four hours, and without leaving the gilded poop adorned with painted war-shields. And Caen, the still more favoured capital of lower Normandy, was equally accessible.

But when Normandy was lost, Winchester no longer presented any advantages over its rival, Westminster. Indeed, to the Plantagenet Edwards with their rough work in Wales and Scotland, the western capital was sadly out of the way, and they preferred the forests of the north to the more artificial preserves of the New Forest. And thus Winchester continued to decline in size and population, so that in 1440 it was reputed that there were more than a thousand houses round about the city lying empty and deserted, and seventeen parish churches closed and falling to decay.

And yet less than a century earlier Winchester had been improved and embellished by its great builder-bishop, himself a Hampshire man, born of humble parents in the village of Wickham, near the coast. A man of affairs and constructive talent rather than a Churchman, he rose to

be chief warden and surveyor to King Edward the Third, justiciar and chancellor, but he retired from political life before the troubles of the following reign began, and the rest of his life seems to have been devoted to the affairs of his diocese, the rebuilding of the cathedral, and the foundation of his famous Winchester School and New College, Oxford, to be recognised in after years by grateful Wykehamists as "the sole and munificent founder of the two St. Mary Winton Colleges."

As a builder, William of Wykeham does not excite our enthusiasm. The nave of Winchester minster strikes one as formal and spiritless, without any redeeming graces of detail, and its junction with the heavy Norman work of Walkelin in tower and transept has not been happily effected. There is a poverty of outline, too, about the exterior that contrasts unfavourably in the beholder's mind with the glories of Lincoln or York. But in its historical associations Winchester is perhaps richer than any of its rivals. The great Alfred, indeed, does not sleep within its precincts. His bones were laid in his own abbey—the new minster, which he built between the cathedral and the present high-street, and which was, at a later date, pulled down, and its establishment transferred to the site which is now marked by the church of St. Bartholomew-Hyde. But, though nothing is left of Alfred's abbey but a name, the spirit of it will be recalled with pride by Englishmen, for from this abbey sallied forth its abbot on the tidings of Norman William's invasion, the abbot with twelve of his monks to join their royal chieftain, Harold. And back they came no more, but died fighting against the invader on the bloody field of Senlac.

Although the abbey of Hyde had carefully preserved the remains of its founder, yet the Reformation, and the destructive processes attendant, destroyed all traces of the spot. Still, the cathedral is the burial-place of a long line of Saxon Kings, whose bones were long ago collected into chests, which still remain in the sanctuary of the minster. Here, too, lies Rufus, whose unhalloved resting-place was long avoided as something accursed. Wykeham sleeps in the nave, in his stately pinnacled booth, while Henry, Cardinal Beaufort,

Arrogant Winchester, that haughty prelate,

of Shakespeare's Henry the Fifth—a priest in whom the aspiring blood of Lancaster stirred more strongly than any priestly

functions could control—here sleeps quietly enough after life's fitful fever. Here, too, in a quiet corner of the south transept, lies the Complete Angler, and, not far off, the gifted authoress whose fame, perhaps, will brighten still with time—the ever-charming Jane Austen, whose studies of character must have been taken chiefly from Hampshire originals.

It is only a short walk from Winchester to the old-world establishment of St. Cross, where the wayfarer may still claim his cup of ale and manchet of bread at the buttery-hatch. Within the quadrangle are the quaint residences of the poor brethren—the hundred men's hall, where formerly a hundred poor people were fed daily by the bounty of the founder; the refectory, with its ancient black-jacks and other mediæval curiosities; and the beautiful little church of Holy Cross, a gem of the later Norman style which marked the age of Henry de Blois, the original founder of the hospital.

Closely connected with the history of Winchester is the New Forest, with its still wild and primitive life, its half-wild ponies, or heath-croppers, its herds of swine, that feed upon the acorns and beech-mast, and its swineherds, who carry the imagination back to the days of the Saxons. A considerable part of this tract was forest from the earliest ages, but it acquired its name as the New Forest from the additions made to it by William the Conqueror, who laid waste all the fertile settled spots within a district thirty miles in extent, so that his deer might roam undisturbed, where hamlets, and churches, and scattered habitations had formerly stood. "The scene of William's greatest crime," writes the historian of the Conquest, "was the scene of the heaviest blows that fell upon him and his house;" and his second son, Richard, was cut off in the New Forest by a sudden and mysterious stroke. Another Richard, the natural son of Robert Curthose, died by a chance blow in the same forest, and the well-known story of the death of Rufus, with its picturesque accessories—the arrow that buried itself in the tyrant's breast; the flight of his attendants; the body lying there among the wild growth of the forest till an humble charcoal-burner placed it on his cart and carried it to Winchester—all this has been for ages a favourite morsel of English history, and has served over and over again "to point a moral or adorn a tale." But, considering that little more than twenty years had elapsed between the cruelties of

the first William and the death of the second, it seems probable that the death of three royal personages on the same spot was due neither to chance nor to the workings of a special Nemesis, but that some of the outlawed English who had been driven from their homes to form a royal hunting-ground took upon themselves the functions of an avenging Providence.

The metropolis of the Forest region is Christchurch, formerly known as Twynham, from its situation in the fork of the twin rivers, the Stour and the Avon. Rich in interesting remains is Christchurch, with its castle keep and noble priory church, on which Randolph Flambard, who was dean or prior here, is said to have tried his 'prentice hand before he raised his stately cathedral at Durham. In its modern aspect, Christchurch is the headquarters of the gunning, punting, yachting fraternity, who find plenty of sport in its shallow inlets and along the curving shores, where soft muddy banks, covered with water-weeds, afford excellent feeding-grounds for all kinds of aquatic birds. Then there is fashionable Bournemouth farther to the west, with its pine-groves and warm, sunny sand-barrens. Following the Avon upwards, we come to Ringwood, not far from which the farm of Avon Tyrrel recalls the story of the death of the Red King, and then to Fordingbridge—both these towns having an ancient reputation for ales, as many a sign up and down the county still testifies.

From Ringwood, one of the ancient highways of the county traverses the New Forest to Romsey, noted for its noble old minster-like church, the former church of the once royal abbey, the most famous nunnery in England, where many Saxon ladies of royal blood and of high degree were educated.

Romsey is upon the Anton river, more properly the Test, for our English way of naming rivers or streams is to call them after the place of most importance to or from which they flow; thus the Anton river is simply the river of Southampton, just as lower down towards the sea the great estuary is known prosaically as Southampton Water. And that reminds us that officially our Hampshire is still known as the county of Southampton, which in its turn suggests the unaccountableness of naming the county after a mere seaport, when royal and episcopal Winchester might have been expected to give its name to the district.

But Southampton was undoubtedly a very early Saxon settlement, perhaps the original Cardic's shore, that saw the first landing of the invaders. But the Southampton of to-day is just a coming and going place, where few people stop long enough to be curious about its history. And Portsmouth, although undoubtedly it takes its name from a great Saxon chief named Port, and not from any Welsh "Porthmawr," or big water-gate, troubles itself little about such old-world fables compared with the latest ironclad or the neatest invention in torpedo-boats. And these are subjects altogether too large for these chronicles.

Things were different in William Gilpin's time. The amiable discoverer of the picturesque, who, visiting Portsmouth about the year 1774, finds room in a few lines to describe the port and its war-ships. "The Eolus put us in mind of that ill-fated adventurer, Thurot, and the Royal George brought to our memory the defeat of Confians in the Bay of Biscay." Quite different now are the memories called up by the Royal George—

Toll for the brave, the brave that are no more—the centenary of whose loss was marked by the Naval Exhibition of 1882. And at this date there may be many to whom Gilpin's allusions are obscure. But they refer to that great year of victories, 1759—the year of the taking of Quebec, when it was necessary, according to Horace Walpole, to ask every morning what new victory there was, for fear of missing one. In that year the French fleet was almost destroyed in numerous engagements, and Confians, the French admiral, decisively beaten by Sir Edward Hawke at Quiberon. Then, also, Thurot, who had attempted a landing in Ireland, was captured with all his squadron.

Now we have only the old Victory to hang a memory upon, in whose dark, miserable cockpit is shown the place where Nelson breathed his last; the laurels of all the great sea-monsters of to-day have still to be won.

What a grand expanse it is that meets the eye from Portsdown, crowned by its huge modern forts, that seem designed for a combat of giants; what a busy scene below in the wide lake-like harbour, with boats and tenders shooting to and fro, and the crowd of masts and sails about Spithead, and the green shores of Wight in the distance! Below lie Fareham

and Cosham nestling among the trees, and the walls and ditches of military Portsmouth, with fields and commons spread out like a map, while westwards the outskirts of the New Forest hang like a cloud over mingled sea and land. Northwards a rich country of parks and woodlands meets the view, the remains of the ancient forest of Bere, and far to the east the graceful spire of Chichester minster rises above the horizon.

Pleasant, too, is the crossing on a fine breezy day from Southsea to Cowes, when we thread our way among the huge iron-clads, encompassed by a cloud of sails of every size and shape—the huge spread of canvas of the racing yachts; the modest lug of the little fishing-yawl. But the sunny, beautiful island, with its silver sands and delightful coves, and romantic drives, has been too happy to have had much history. And it has little to show in relics of the past—a few Henry the Eighth castles at various points of the coast, a priory or two (Quorn Abbey to wit) occupied as country mansions, and the foundations of some Roman villa to remind us that the beauties of Wight were even in those remote times known and appreciated.

And yet Carisbrook must not be forgotten, the central point of historic interest in the island ever since 530, when Cerdic and Cynric gained Wightland and slew many men on Wihthgarabyrig. From this rather lengthy name we get Carisbrook, which ought rather to be called Carisberg, as there is no brook about the premises, the castle being supplied by a well of immense depth and unknown antiquity.

The chief interest of Carisbrook is, however, connected with the imprisonment of Charles the First. The melancholy ruins of Carisbrook may dwell in the memory as a fit scene for the last weary, troubled days of the unfortunate King.

When Charles made his escape from Hampton Court his course was naturally towards the west, where his friends and adherents were most plentiful. He might have escaped to France without much difficulty, but he could not make up his mind that his cause was really hopeless. At first he concealed himself at Titchfield House, near Fareham, the seat of the Wriothesleys. And from Titchfield, moved by one of those fatal impulses which were urging him step by step to his doom, he resolved to surrender himself to Colonel Hammond, the governor of the Isle of Wight. Now, Hammond was the nephew

of the King's favourite chaplain, and Charles had every hope that he would deal favourably with him. But the Colonel had married a daughter of the patriot Hampden, and his interest was bound up with the party of the Parliament. Still, Charles was treated with all respect, and conducted to the island, and to its royal castle, rather as a guest than a prisoner. And here his friends had constant access to him, and again he might have escaped had his mind been resolved that way. It is said that everything had been arranged one night; his friends waiting outside, horses in readiness, and a vessel lying off the coast. But he was unable to squeeze himself between the bars of his windows, and gave up the attempt. Had his heart gone first, we may imagine that through that window, or some other, the King would have won his way; but, perhaps, at that moment it struck him that it was not a dignified thing for a monarch to fly from his kingdom like a thief in the night, and so he remained. And, really, things seemed about to take a favourable turn. The Parliament was ready to come to terms with him; some treaty had been actually arranged. Cromwell was in the north, where the Scotch were in insurrection, and although the last efforts of the Royalists in England had been extinguished by the capture of Colchester, yet the Parliament, seriously alarmed at the overbearing power of their army, might well look to the King to redress the balance.

Charles removed from Carisbrook to Newport, and here carried on his negotiations as a high contracting power. Again he might have escaped, but he had given his word to those in charge of him, and he refrained. And then, towards the end of November, a sudden change came over the scene. Cromwell had returned, all opposition crushed. The army was in motion. Fairfax threw out strong corps towards the west. Colonel Hammond, who was suspected of being too favourable to the King, was ordered to attend the general at headquarters, soldiers were landed on the island, the guards were doubled, every post was in the hands of the most rigid of Cromwell's officers. And, from his lodgings in Newport, the King was removed to a rigorous confinement in Hurst Castle; and hence his course was fixed, to his trial at Westminster and his execution at Whitehall.

A miserable place of imprisonment must Hurst Castle have been, right in the midst of the melancholy sea, for King Charles's

last wintry days, but not without healthy features, if we may judge from the long imprisonment there of Father Atkinson, who—it seems incredible, but is recorded in local annals—was confined in the castle for more than thirty years for some offence against the laws directed against Papists, and who died there in 1729—in George the Second's reign, under Walpole's government—aged seventy-four. Perhaps he had grown too much accustomed to his prison to care to leave it, and was kept there out of charity. And if he had been fond of fishing and boating, and on good terms with the Government, perhaps the time passed pleasantly enough, with a run now and then to Lymington or Beaulieu Abbey, with its charming prospects and ancient monastic associations.

But we have lingered too long in this corner of the county, and must make a rapid flight to its northern border, where Highclere lies among the hills—noted hills in former days, as camps and entrenchments defending every crest and mount are there to testify. And a wild, picturesque country it is all the way to Silchester—the Pompeii of Hampshire as somebody has called it; really a marvellous remain standing there in the lonely country, with walls, and towers, and the green banks of an amphitheatre close by. Here intelligent excavations have been carried on, and there is a museum on the spot, rich in all kinds of relics of the former dwellers in the prosperous town, which with its baths, its forum, its shops, its well-warmed villas, and well-paved streets, might compare not unfavourably with a Hampshire town of the present day.

Crossing the country towards Basingstoke, we pass a snug and pleasant seat called The Vine—a name which has a modern sound, but which really is very ancient—Camden says, from a vineyard made by the Romans, which is likely enough, but might be more satisfactorily established. In Basingstoke, the most conspicuous monument is the ruined chapel of the Holy Ghost, in the midst of a cemetery, that really dates from the reign of Henry the Seventh, the chapel of a guild of the period which embraced the education of the poor amongst its objects. And thus the tower of the chapel has a winding stair which led into a chamber fitted for a resident-master, who might also be the guild chaplain. The Basingstoke Canal, indeed, may be classed among the ancient monuments, although barely a century old

—so quiet and deserted it seems, and likely soon to give up business altogether.

Old Basing is interesting, with a great circular entrenchment which probably existed before the castle, and has lasted longer than the perishing stones of that Basing House which held out so long and so gallantly for King Charles. John Paulet, Marquis of Winchester, the lord of Basing, headed the defence. Provisions ran short, and Colonel Gage marched from Oxford on a raiding expedition to relieve the place. He succeeded in waylaying enough of the enemy's supplies to provision the place; but the siege was reformed with greater strictness, and soon provisions were short again in the garrison. This time the relief was to be attempted by a thousand horsemen, who, riding through the ranks of the besiegers with each a bag of provisions in his saddle, should fling their burden within reach of the garrison, and ride away again. The old soldiers of the period were full of such whimsical devices, and this one might have answered very well; but when the gallant band arrived near Basing, they found that the siege had been raised, and the enemy had retired to winter quarters. After that, Cromwell directed the siege, and it was taken by storm in 1645—affording fine plundering to the Independent soldiers.

Cromwell had certainly a fine gift in the way of destruction, and what he had broken it was hard to put together again. The Paulets abandoned the task, and made their chief residence at Hackwood Park, formerly a mere dependency of Basing. One of their successors, become Duke of Bolton, enlivened the annals of the peerage by his marriage with the actress, Lavinia Fenton, the celebrated Polly Peachum of *The Beggar's Opera*.

We cannot leave Hampshire without a glimpse of Selborne, the home of Gilbert White, lying in its pleasant secluded valley—perhaps more secluded now than even in the time of its worthy historian. A later naturalist, the much regretted Frank Buckland, visiting the place in 1875, discovered an old lady, ninety-three years of age, who remembered Gilbert White, "a quiet old gentleman with old-fashioned sayings," who used to keep a locust that crawled about the garden. On further consideration, the old lady agreed that the locust was a tortoise.

Selborne lies on the skirts of Woolmer Forest, and Gilbert White describes the drying of Woolmer pond; which, according



to the general tradition of the neighbourhood, was held to contain a great treasure. Thus when the muddy bottom became dry, the villagers in great numbers began a search, which was not altogether unrewarded. Great stores of copper coins were found, layers upon layers as if bags full had been emptied there. The finders sold what they could to the gentry and virtuosi; the rest became current coin, and passed for farthings at the petty shops. A strange fate for the coinage of Carausius and Allectus.

#### AFTER THE RAIN.

ALL day above the tired earth had lain,  
 Hueless and grey, the funeral pall of cloud;  
 All day the sudden sweeps of chilling rain,  
 Had broken, fitful, from the lowering shroud;  
 All day the dreary sobbing of the breeze,  
 Had sounded sadly from the yellowing trees.  
 At once the wailing wind rose high and higher,  
 Rousing to flash and foam the sullen sea;  
 And the great forest, like a giant lyre,  
 Echoed the keynote of the harmony:  
 It furled the clouds before it like a tent,  
 And, lo! the sunshine dazzled from the rent.  
 And all the wet world gladdened to the ray,  
 As tear-dimmed eyes gleam to a loving word;  
 Answering its call out-laughed the weary day,  
 As a fond slave springs joyful to her lord,  
 Forgotten chill and darkness, doubt and fear,  
 "Absent, I droop—I joy, for thou art here!"

#### UNIVERSITY MEN AND EAST LONDON EXHIBITIONS.

THERE was nothing remarkable about the "East London Industrial Exhibition" except its size and the manner of its opening. I have seen in country towns things of the same kind, in which some of the exhibits showed cleverer mechanical invention and greater technical skill; but then they had no more illustrious patron than the parson, or, perhaps, the mayor. This Whitechapel exhibition was opened by a real Princess, with all the glory of bunting, and poles wrapped in red cloth, and street mottoes, such as "Welcome our arts to view," and "More arts, more peace, more royal visits to the East;" and its stalls were kept by real peeresses.

It has become a sort of fashion to pet the East End. Lord Shaftesbury has much to answer for in this respect. He is always either presiding at costers' donkey races, or pouring out the coffee at cabmen's free breakfasts, or showing in some such way how he is possessed with the idea that the East Ender is a man and a brother. Money, too, one great test of sympathy, certainly is not wanting. All the summer through it pours in to enable batches of school-children to get a few

hours' romping in Epping Forest, or, if the managers are very ambitious, under the Bushey Park chestnuts. Sometimes there is something much better at the end of the drive—a happy afternoon under the trees on somebody's suburban lawn, with cakes, and fruit, and a hot cup of tea, and welcome and sympathy, without patronising fussiness, from the lady of the house. Some of the money is spent in what strikes me as the very best way possible—half-a-dozen sickly children are caught and sent down to one of those many East Coast watering-places that the railway company is always finding out, or else to some healthy village not too far from town. Here they are allowed to run wild for ten days or so, of course with someone to look after them, enjoying, as no children could except those whose ordinary view of Nature is limited to the things in the greengrocers' shops, the wonders of the fields or the shore. For many a little one, brought up in a London court, such a change means the difference between growing up healthy, or blighted and unable to bear the stress of life. No one who has not been out with them can imagine the joy to East End children of seeing wild-flowers in the fields, and trees really green and fresh, and listening to the hum of bees, and to all the other sounds of which, through use, the country child thinks nothing. Their love of flowers is pathetic. Years ago I was helping in a Stepney Sunday-school; a teacher was triumphantly despoiling a nine-year-old urchin of a long, limp potato-haulm. The boy, with tears, protested: "Please, sir, it's a flau-er." Prowling around the night before, he had picked it up and treasured it for the sake of the dull mauve blossoms.

Far too rarely, too, the country is opened to older people, convalescents of both sexes, who have just lived long enough to find that life is very, very hard, whether it means slop-work, or clerk's work and general drudgery in a sixth-rate office. Such people get knocked up; and if not taken in hand kindly and judiciously, they sink, and are seldom successfully pulled up again. To send them down into the country, to treat them like brothers and sisters when they are there, is a work needing not money only, but tact and discrimination. As one looks at the many country houses lying empty, one thinks it might be done much more extensively. Here is a squire with three "Halls." His father was a great land-buyer; and he, a great game-

preserver, makes his land pay, despite the fall in rents, with pheasants, and partridges, and rabbits. That is why he cannot let the two houses in which he does not live—because he will not let the occupiers have the shooting of a single acre, and few men care to live seven miles from a station, boxed up within garden walls, with their nearest neighbour (not counting the parson) nearly as far away as the railroad. But if only Mr. Shooter Moneybags would, for a consideration, let his house for the summer and autumn to a committee, who would put a matron there and a couple of stout servants, and would send down, month and month about, batches of a dozen or so worn-out shop-girls, and board-school teachers, and makers of ulsters for fourpence halfpenny each—Mr. Lowell's

Motherless girls, whose fingers thin  
Feebly push from them want and sin—

what a blessing these empty houses, now some of them actually tumbling down for want of repairs, might be to the East End! There are empty halls enough in Norfolk alone to furnish quite as many "Homes of Rest" for both sexes—for I would open half of them to clerks, and warehousemen, and such like—as would suffice for a beginning; and, once begun, I am sure the plan would be widely adopted.

But it is in winter that the East End puts its hand deepest into the pockets of the West. Then people swarm in from all sides; there is so much going in the way of flannel, and soup, and firing, that—as in some country towns where there are many doles—room-rent rises, and lodgers get packed to overcrowding. Everybody who can give gives; for all know that a dock-labourer's life is a hard one. "He gets half-a-crown three days a week, and a bad cold the rest," is as near the truth as possible. And then, if before the strike which drove shipbuilding to the Clyde the labourer was a shipwright, earning high wages, the precarious existence is all the harder to bear. Such sufferers are, of course, the few, the loafers far outnumber them; and the difficulty of parsons and charity organisers alike is to see that they do not help the undeserving.

For years this petting has been going on. People who forget that there are slums and poverty at their own doors—in Pimlico, and round Lisson Grove and St. Anne's, Soho, and in the courts off St. Martin's Lane, and (not to speak of Seven Dials) in the very next street to the

British Museum, send their money Eastward. Things are so different from what they were when young Mr. Heckford and his wife founded that "Small Star in the East" for sick children, and he, with few but Edward Denison to cheer him, actually broke his heart at the work. The "Star" now shines with the added lustre of royal patronage; has become, in fact, a star of the very first magnitude; while, as for district visiting, it is taken in hand by officers of the Guards, young Fellows of colleges, "all sorts and conditions of men," and with the best possible result.

But the Exhibition? Well, I hope the exhibitors will not be too proud of what they have sent, and will be trained by what they see at Mrs. Barnett's conversaziones, and her husband's loan-picture exhibitions, to a truer feeling for colour. Patchwork quilts are all very well, but they look less natural and more gariish on a drill-room wall than on a cottage-bed. One of them, made by a soldier in India, is quite a work of art, with camels, and ships, and the Government House at Calcutta; but then, as art, one cannot help wondering what the native, who blends his colours so carefully, would think of it, and of the wool-work pictures by a brewer's drayman, and of the "Model of a College," built up in stiff, solid wool-work, green edged with red, like a Chinese pagoda, of which its architect, a plasterer, says, "It will stand as long as an ordinary-built house," and which he is so delighted with that he means to keep it for himself, warning off possible purchasers with the notice "the price is eighty guineas."

I hope no Hindoo visitor will look on these, and others like them, as samples of English taste, and (when he gets home) persuade his countrymen to give up their own graceful designs and try to imitate us. This is a real danger; it threatens to vulgarise Japanese art; and Mrs. King, in her very interesting *Civilian's Wife in India*, says the German missionaries, good, honest souls, but without a particle of taste, are ousting the fine native embroidery, and teaching in their schools the most commonplace Berlin wool-work; and, as a consequence, she saw in the boudoirs of several go-ahead Baboo's wives, ladies who have had some European training, such frightful antimacassars and hideous home-made mats and rugs as would drive an aesthete out of the room.

Crude colour and showy ornament seem the East Ender's idea of what is pretty and

becoming; and one cannot wonder at it, for the great thing in that neighbourhood is to light up dingy rooms amid grimy surroundings. Still, things can be bright and attractive and yet artistic; only one needs to be educated up to them, and this the men at Toynbee Hall have taken in hand to do. I wonder whether, supposing this East End Exhibition becomes a yearly affair, we shall, owing to Toynbee influence, note a yearly improvement. Some of the most flaunting things are sure to be left unsold, no matter how eager visitors are to follow the Princess's example, and take the best way of encouraging exhibitors by buying exhibits. Ought not the Toynbee men to buy some of these, and therewith form a museum which may show gradual progress? How nice if that poor Irishwoman, for instance, who out of shavings and refuse wax made the trophy which she calls "the Elements of Ireland," could be educated up—and seemingly the task would not be a hard one—to true artistic feeling. And if the maker of that wonderful fern-case, with light-blue perforated zinc top, and pink glass globes at the corners, could be taught that adaptation to its purpose is in everything the first essential of beauty. I do not know what to say about shell-work; it is as popular at the East End as it is among some savage tribes. Here is a grand flower-stand—the pots sunk in shell-covered cases, surmounting a shell grotto of three arches; swans float on looking-glass in the centre one; under each side arch a china-ware dog keeps a look-out for intruders. Of shells, too, not as art, but as natural history, there is quite a good collection, scientifically arranged, exhibited by a relieving-officer. I was glad to recognise the fresh-water mussel and several other English kinds; but I should have preferred the whole collection to be English, with legible notices of where each species was picked up. The same exhibitor shows coins, and medals (some very rare), and tokens. I think I saw among them a bawbee such as one used, when I was a child, to get occasionally in a handful of halfpence, with its St. Andrew on his cross on one side, and on the other the thistle and "Nemo me impune lacesset." Here is a little ebony casket, with silver ornaments made out of a sixpence and a threepenny-piece. Into it fit a box of dice, a chessboard and men, and ditto draughts, and a cribbage-board. It was all wrought on the exhibitor's own lathe,

and, with its microscopic lock and key, has evidently made a great impression on Mr. M'Laglen, the worthy director and secretary, who has had a good deal of experience in such exhibitions. It would be a dainty present for Queen Mab, if her majesty ever indulges in human games of skill and chance.

Then there is a picture-frame "of a hundred pieces, put together"—says the proud exhibitor—"without a single nail." He has not heard of the bishop's throne in Exeter Cathedral, from which nails are equally excluded. A policeman values at four pounds an inlaid table of one thousand and forty-four pieces, the work of four years. He has the tender feelings usually attributed to his "cloth"; and refuses to sell at any price a workbox, the top of which looks like the table in miniature. But what is his table compared with that shown by an ex-sailor of H.M. Highflyer, and containing three thousand pieces? A carpenter in the first year after his apprenticeship shows a chiffonier, and is careful to inform you that it took him six hundred and ninety-seven hours. Men used not to think so much of hours in the old time. Did Grinling Gibbons, I wonder, count all the time he spent on his wonderful birds and fruit? Or the old men who carved the angels and bishops and star-bosses in the heavy oak roofs of the East Anglian churches, could they have told to an hour how long the work had taken them?

Well, there are needlework feathers—misplaced labour, when the Burmese or South American way of making real feather ornaments is so much better; patchwork cushions and ditto dressing-gowns; tea-cosies, models of ships and of churches, a set of furniture in coal, a tin violin and dulcimer (I should not like to be that man's neighbour); a lot of things done by the well-known George Yard Ragged School; a carpenter's shop from Dr. Barnardo's, with the boys hard at work in it; stuffed birds and beasts; a boy's "stage," such as we used to show The Wooden Horse and Timour the Tartar in when I was a child; and an ingenious way of using up broken crockery by beating it small, and making it into mosaic picture-frames. I was most struck with the work of that almost fingerless cripple, whose photograph is placed beside his exhibit. So much better for him to be amusing himself and others with quiet, useful industry, than, like a cripple of my boyish days, enforcing

alms as he rattled along the streets on a board supported on four small wheels.

What astonished me was the fewness of the working models and mechanical inventions, such as the endless wheel that draws up water if you put in a penny; the coal-pit whose buckets ascend and descend under the same stimulus. Why, I have never seen a Midland workmen's exhibition without them, and half-a-dozen like them. They are here, happily, replaced by a "patent apparatus for actuating ships' pumps by heavy pendulums"; by a patent grain-elevator, and ditto cinder-sifter.

And, now, what is the good of such an Exhibition? Why, mainly to show the East Enders, who flock in to see what their friends have done, how much better it is to spend your idle time in making something, even if (like a sailor who sends a bit of carving) you have nothing but a pocket-knife to do it with, than to be boozing beer or whisky. The fife-and-drum bands (the Rev. Osborne Jay's, and Dr. Barnardo's, and that of the H division of police among them), some of which are almost always playing, show the youngsters that there's something livelier to be had in the way of amusement than toss-penny. And the grand ladies who, from two o'clock onwards, diligently preside at the stalls, are a lesson to Maria Hann, and so, indirectly, to 'Arry, that taste in dress does not consist in loud colours, and costumes that exaggerate even the fashion-books. It must have been startling to the East Ender to see Countesses, and even a Marchioness, so plainly attired that nothing they had on called for observation. The refreshment-stall, again, is full of teaching for others besides the working-man. To him it proves the superiority of tea and coffee, for the hard work of going through a bit of sight-seeing on, over beer or spirits. To his "friends and patrons" it shows how thoroughly tea and coffee are appreciated, if they are good as well as cheap and are provided amid clean, cheerful surroundings. It is not so in most coffee-taverns. In a country town the coffee-tavern is generally the frowziest shop of all, with a does-not-pay-its-expenses, cannot-get-in-the-subscriptions sort of look about it. The best coffee-taverns I have ever been in were in Dublin. They were cleaner than the London ones, and the drinks were distinctly better. You cannot compete with the public-house, unless you learn of the Russians how to keep the "samovar" always hot, and yet not to serve up stale boiled tea.

Well, I was delighted with the Exhibition, not for what it exhibited, but for what it promised. It is pleasant, too, to think that it was appreciated, and that so many East Enders thought it worth threepence to see the great ladies at their stalls, that the takings for a day which does not begin till two p.m. have averaged twenty-five pounds. Whitechapel, too, has certainly grown sweeter, without losing that cosmopolitan flavour which makes it the raciest of our suburbs. It has three railway-stations, one at East and one at West Aldgate, one next door to the Exhibition itself; and yet, despite this and all the overflowing charity which I spoke of at the beginning, I am sure there are thousands who will go to the South Kensington show as matter of course, but who will never even have heard of this East London Exhibition. Still, a good many have heard of it; the Princess Louise and the Marquis of Lorne did not visit the far East for nothing; and their coming will help to draw East and West closer together. That is what is wanted, not mere money help, but intelligent sympathy; just what life at Toynbee Hall, in fact, is teaching University men to give.

For Toynbee Hall and the buildings connected with it form a "residential club," where eleven Oxford men, three Cambridge men, and one Edinburgh man live just off Commercial Street in what, when the red-brick has lost its freshness, will look like a very small college spirited away from one of our universities. They have their dining-hall, which is also a library, and is open at night as a free reading-room for the neighbourhood. Their "common" or "combination" room is let by day to the School Board, for examining pupil-teachers in; at night it is used for lectures, readings, and so on. Here Professor Gardiner lectures on History; Lieutenant Waghorn on Light; Mr. Pye on Physiology; Mr. Sedley Taylor on the Relation of Labour and Capital. This is the very best of teaching—far better than Oxonians and Cantabs get from their tutors at some colleges that I could name—brought to the East Enders' very doors. Then there are lighter subjects—one man reads (I was told) *Pickwick* and *In Memoriam* on alternate evenings, and finds the mixture answer very well—"it gives him such a range." True, when one thinks of it, for intelligent lads all culture lies between the two, and these lads, who have been pupil-teaching all day, are

intelligent; and through them, thus influenced, we may be sure a great deal more than culture "filters down."

The "men's" rooms are furnished according to individual taste; some very simply, but none ascetically; some with the usual knickknacks of an art-loving bachelor's room. Most of them are about their own work during the day, helping, but not necessarily so, in the various evening classes. And what a glorious life for a clerk in a Government office, compared with the dreary round of small fashionable society to which he is too often condemned! If he has day-leisure, he can (as some of these Toynbee men do) act as voluntary School Board visitor, about the most useful task a man can undertake, for it brings independent opinion to bear where it is so much needed; or as school-manager; or as poor-law guardian; or as visitor for the Charity Organisation. At any rate, at night, twice a week or so, he can have his "class," making them feel as if they were at a friendly soirée, and really enjoying himself far more than he could do in rushing from one At Home to another, exchanging silly nothings with men and women for whom he cares as little as they care for him. I wonder if the working East Ender has the entrée of that simple, yet most elegant drawing-room, with its deep gilt moulding round the ceiling, its high leather dado, its Chinese wall-pictures, and cane settees! I am sure Toynbee Hall has been taking note of this Exhibition, and determining that, as far as in it lies, there shall be an improvement year after year: better taste, more sense of fitness in colour and ornament and material. Such a "residential club" must do good to both the sojourners and those among whom they sojourn. The great want in the East has been residents of higher thoughts and aspirations and culture than the artisan. People down there are too much all of one sort, with no one except the clergy—who, of course, are somewhat suspected as paid agents—to say or do any of the things which the good squire does or says in the model village, and which the public-spirited man of some little leisure and a good deal of refinement does and says—more or less thoroughly—in every part of London.

University men, too, must gain immensely by an apprenticeship of this kind in the school of social sympathy. Their ideas must get expanded, their pet illusions destroyed, and new, true views substituted for them. Too many men still grow up at

the University in a classic scorn of "cads." The sisters of the said "cads" they look on in a way which made Bristed, of Harvard, in his Three Years at an English University, speak of England as still sunk in feudalism, "reverencing lady as lady, but not woman as woman." What a grand thing to draw these two conditions of men together, to make them feel that each has much to learn from the other! That is what Arnold Toynbee felt; and he died in the work of talking to artisans, "getting at" them, refuting Communist absurdities (which the "have-nots" find it so hard not to believe in) by showing that there is such a thing as Christian Socialism. Toynbee Hall is his memorial; and one wants to see a portrait of him and one of F. D. Maurice, the pioneer of all this work, the man for whom, because some thought him not quite orthodox, the Church could find nothing better than a starveling living in Vere Street, but who did more to make Christianity possible for working men than half the Bishops, Deans, and Archdeacons in the Establishment. Things have changed quite as much as that splendid specimen of red-brick Gothic, with the fine carving in the tympanum of its north porch door, is a change from the St. Mary's, Whitechapel, of my boyhood, when University men talk of "the bounden duty of the rich, the only justification of their existence, and assuredly the only guarantee for their continuance, being personal work for the welfare of those whose labours create their wealth from day to day." Of course all this needs care and tact. It is possible for a Toynbee man to develop into a very unpleasant kind of prig, and for the pupil-teachers and others whom he influences to be spoiled—made bumptious and offensive, and full of empty nonsense. But there are risks in everything, and the workers who are giving up a part of their leisure to help the studies, and share the recreations, and enlarge the minds of their less fortunate brethren, are enlisted for the "short service system," and so can give it up the moment they find it does not agree with them. I hope there will be a lot more Toynbee Halls. Somebody suggests Staples Inn as one ready built; and certainly there are "rookeries" enough within hail of it to employ the energies of a score of workers. If he does not mean to help in some way, a man has no right to walk about in the slums; for to get familiarised with the sight of misery that one does not try to alleviate is to risk

having our sympathies blunted. And for men of the more cultured classes to work as these Toynbee men are working, is to set forward progress instead of revolution. They will get to know what the working-man really has in his mind; and if any of them are, by-and-by, to be parsons, or squires, or employers of labour, what a wonderful help that insight will be.

These are some of the thoughts that came into my mind as, after being shown over Toynbee Hall (noting the mosaic on St. Jude's Church, and not forgetting how much its parson, Mr. Barnett, has done to draw rich and poor together), I went through the East London Exhibition, and then wondering at "the pavement industries," pushed my way westward along the broad thoroughfare. Some of these "industries" I would have brought into the exhibition—the mechanical mouse, the wondrous penny-worths of wood-carving—above all, the little birds, who, "if you give a penny take a planet showing your destiny in life." How did that dark-skinned woman teach them? And does it never happen that two birds come on together, and, each pulling a folded paper out of the tray in front of the cage, insist on giving you two fortunes instead of one? But one cannot do everything at once, and to the Toynbee men and others like them, I look to bring into the East that breadth of sympathy which should include even bird-tamers among working-people. It is Communism versus individual effort, and, from what the world has hitherto seen, the latter is infinitely preferable—is, in fact, the only true way, and it is the way in which the Toynbee men are walking.

#### A GROUP OF IMMORTALS.

A STORY IN SEVEN CHAPTERS.

##### CHAPTER VI.

TWENTY years had glided by—a goodly portion out of man's allotted span. The idler of thirty was an idler still. With travel, dilettante tastes—and, let me say at least this much on my own behalf, some desultory work for the public weal—I had contrived to occupy myself so that the two decades were come and gone as a dream.

Youth but a thing of yesterday, and already age had come!

I had never fallen in love again, and had remained a bachelor.

From the date of that moonlit night, and reluctant promise wrung from me with a kiss, Lionelle disappeared from my ken as completely as if we were denizens of

separate planets. She ever retained her old place in my heart, and her hold on my imagination. Fickle and desultory in all else, here I was constant.

Perhaps my faithfulness had root in vanity. Perhaps I remained true to the ideal of my youth because I had never found another woman I would fain have made my wife.

It was a superlative July day. On just such an afternoon twenty years before, leisurely riding along a country road that led upwards from the sea, I had first caught sight of Lionelle. And now, so strange chance would have it, I visited once more the same pleasant seaside town and suburban country dotted with villas—the very scene of enchanted days so long past yet unforgettable.

I had been invited by a rich Australian acquaintance, recently settled in England, to join a party of friends about to assemble in his country-house.

"We possess everything in the way of material comfort that the heart of mortal can desire," wrote my host. "A mansion fitted up in what my upholsterer assures me is the newest style; conservatories filled with tropical plants; tennis-lawns; horses and carriages; well-trained servants, the smartest page-boy, the most ladylike maids, the most gentlemanly footmen imaginable. All that we want, and hardly know how to set about obtaining, is a little good society. We are now going to muster a few friends together, and shall try to give, with their aid, an out-of-door party or two. So come as soon as you can, and stay as long as you will, in order to aid us unsophisticated bush-folk in this our first plunge into the vortex of fashionable life. My wife's solicitations accompany my own."

There was a frank bonhomie about this letter that disarmed criticism, and having enjoyed my friend's society during my bush travels, I felt bound to accord him all the good offices he asked at my hands now.

I accepted the invitation, therefore, and, by an odd coincidence, the date of my arrival exactly corresponded with the only unforgettable one I could boast of in life's calendar—that day on which the vision of Lionelle had dazzled me for the first time.

Having sent up my luggage, I rode leisurely in the direction of Appleby House. As I left the bay and the town—doubled in size and importance since I had visited it—I found that the destination indicated to me by my host must take me

close to the hydropathic establishment of romantic memory.

True enough, there rose the solid old mansion in grey freestone from its sombre entourage of veteran illexes; there were the shrubberies in which I had played hide-and-seek with Lionelle; and there—I could not be mistaken—peeped out from the surrounding greenery the tiny summer-house in which I had sealed my fateful promise with a kiss. It occurred to me all at once to pull out my friend's letter, for this seemed the very place described to me as Appleby House.

I found my conjecture perfectly correct. The hydropathic establishment, then, had gone the way of so many other similar ventures! The bath-houses had been turned into stables—their original use—the bright coloured glass lamps had been removed, and the old-fashioned country-house in every respect had resumed its normal aspect. Strangely enough, therefore, I was about to spend a few days amid surroundings consecrated to the one love and crowningsorrow of an everyday mortal's existence. And to the one mystery! I had no clearer conception now than then, what Lionelle meant by those enigmatic utterances on the subject of undying youth and a dual existence. And as the scenes of that last passionate episode once more passed before my eyes, I could explain to myself why I had been able to keep my word, and consent to let Lionelle hide herself from me for ever. Ah, had her conduct been different that night when we exchanged a last valediction, should I now be able to boast of a promise inviolably kept? I almost shuddered as I recalled her impersonal smile, her ice-cold kiss. I was content to believe that all was dark and mysterious concerning her. I hugged the notion that once during my humdrum, prosaic existence I had touched the shores of the impalpable and unfamiliar. We accept mystery as one of the conditions of human existence. Why, then, should we feel such astonishment when brought face to face with phenomena we cannot explain in the human as well as the inert globe? Why might not Lionelle be a wholly exceptional being, a creature whose outward frame was not doomed to decay?

A bend in the road brought me suddenly in full view of the well-remembered terrace and smooth-shaven lawn where I had seen Lionelle and Julian playing battledore-and-shuttlecock in their dazzling youth and beauty, a full score of years ago.

But could I believe the evidence of my senses? Were these images now impacted on my retina, substantial, living forms, or the phantoms of a disturbed fancy? Was I indeed to be ever within these precincts the victim of enchantment and wizardry?

There, hardly changed, if changed at all—there in the undeceiving July sunshine, standing out against the green foliage bright and clear as in a picture, I beheld the very same group that had fascinated my gaze twenty years before.

Lionelle, in her white gown, played battledore-and-shuttlecock with the bright Julian as in days gone by. Mr. Bolingbroke and his wife, perhaps a trifle aged, but bland, animated, gracious as of old, looked on from the rustic seat. The sister's clear, sweet voice reached me where I paused, the brother's mettlesome reply, as the pair playfully quarrelled over their game. I heard the subdued laughter of Mrs. Bolingbroke, her husband's gently-uttered comments; but not pausing to hear more, I gave my horse the rein and rode on.

A groom was standing by the portico; the hall-door was open. So, merely giving my name as I alighted, I hastened through the drawing-room towards the group on the lawn. Mr. Bolingbroke rose to greet me with the slightly artificial smile, and easy, yet perhaps studied grace I remembered so well.

"Our host will be here presently; he bade me welcome you in his place," he began with extreme suavity, and evidently not recognising me; but I broke forth with frank, almost brutal impatience:

"Good Heaven! then it is only I who have grown old! I do indeed behold a group of immortals!"

#### CHAPTER VII. UNRAVELLINGS.

MY interlocutor looked more than puzzled, and I was at the same time conscious of a thrill of shocked surprise electrifying the little group. The first solution of the mystery occurring to all was evidently that a maniac had effected his entrance into the house surreptitiously. Did indeed a transient hallucination take possession of me? Had some collyrium temporarily blinded my vision to the solid realities of things? Certain it is that as I glanced from one to the other, I believed myself among immortals in a new sense, creatures of flesh and blood like myself, but untouched by the hand of Time.

I went straight up to Lionelle. The sun shone in my eyes; I could not see her

face clearly, but the slender form, the fair hair beautifully arranged in a coronet, the pale, finely-cut features, the exquisite finish of dress, the sprightly grace—all these were hers, and hers unchanged.

She had, then, been true to her word; she had not grown old!

"Lionelle," I cried, taking her hand, and drawing her a little apart, "you at least cannot have forgotten me. Not mine, like yours, the privilege of perpetual youth; but in one respect I am unchanged—I, your old lover, Gerald Archer, love you still!"

She drew back with a startled look; the beautiful head was averted in dismay.

Mr. Bolingbroke, however, had either caught the sound of my name, or had been unexpectedly reminded of my former self by something in voice, look, or manner, for he now approached me quite cordially.

"Mr. Gerald Archer!" he said, smiling his old bland smile. "The fellow-guest we were bidden to expect, and—I cannot be mistaken!—a fellow-guest of my own in this very house years and years ago."

He nodded to the little group of immortals on the terrace.

"Go on with your game, my dears," he said to the players of battledore-and-shuttlecock. "Resume your embroidery, my love," he added to the smiling, elegantly-dressed matron beside him. "Meantime, my old friend will take a turn with me in the shrubberies."

He put his arm within my own, and led me towards the outer garden. I assented without so much as looking back. I realised already that whatever revelations were in store for me, I had not found Lionelle.

"I now recall every circumstance connected with our former acquaintance," he began: "your kind interest in the hydropathic establishment, your prolonged stay, your unconcealed admiration of the young lady accompanying me—my pseudo-daughter. It is not astonishing that you should express some surprise at finding us all here again—to use your own words—a veritable group of immortals."

He laughed, not without irony. Then he grew friendly, even confidential.

"Very likely I look wonderfully young for a septuagenarian, but age and infirmities tell upon a man, in spite of the perruquier's skill and the staymaker's cunning—never a greater fallacy than to fancy women the sole patrons of corsets and whalebone! Could you see me off duty, in undress, so to speak, you would find a wrinkled, decrepit, haggard, aged man."

We had now reached the extreme limits of the upper garden, and he turned into the little summer-house in which I had taken such passionate leave of Lionelle. Bringing out a couple of cigarettes, he handed me one, motioning me to be seated.

"True, the youthfulness of my companions is not simulated. But, you see, they are mere duplicates—replicas of the charming associates of your youth. Since we lost sight of each other, indeed, how many blooming daughters and accomplished sons have I not had! My profession, you see, necessitates it."

"You are here professionally?" I asked, beginning to see my way through the maze.

"Precisely; that pretty domestic tableau, for instance, you came upon just now has been arranged and rearranged, I dare wager, five hundred times. It is my trump-card, and has made the fortune of scores of boarding-houses, set things going for dozens of unsophisticated parvenus. You would never conceive the pains it has cost me. Every detail has been gone into over and over again, down to my wife's knitting-pins."

Again he laughed, his odd, worldly, almost sardonic little laugh, and went on:

"You, of course, took me and my little troupe for just what we appeared to be twenty years ago—an amiable family, of cosmopolitan tastes, in quest of change and recreation. I will let you into a curious secret. I dare say that you have found out for yourself, long ago, that humanity may be classified under two heads: the first, consisting of those who can amuse themselves; the second, of those who cannot. The calling of men like myself supplies the needs of the latter class. I have floated hydropathic establishments, *pensions de famille*, hotels, country-houses of new-made millionaires in all parts of the civilised globe; but, whilst entertaining and enriching others, myself remain a pauper. Were old Horatio Bolingbroke to be gathered to his fathers to-morrow, he would hardly leave the wherewithal to provide his remains with Christian burial."

Whilst making this confession, Mr. Bolingbroke had allowed himself to shake off his forced elasticity of manner, to forget his society smile—wrinkles were permitted to have full play, the trim, upright figure to fall into its natural bend. I saw before me a careworn, feeble wreck of former days.

"My company," he went on, "my artificial family, is a very expensive one and extortionate to boot. The salaries of these people, my dear sir, increase every year,



and you little know how much else I have to contend with. These soft-voiced duennas, these playful sons and daughters, I assure you, quarrel like cat and dog behind the scenes, and make life intolerable to me."

"But Lionelle?" I asked. "Talk of her."

"Ah, Lionelle! She had nothing in common with the mercenary herd I allude to; she ever treated me kindly and becomingly," said the old man, wiping away a genuine tear. Then, with a sudden touch of the theatrical, he added: "As long as I live, were it to cost me my last morsel of bread, I shall place an immortelle on that sweet girl's tomb."

"She is dead, then?" I asked, for the moment unmindful of the intervening years, unmindful also of her mystic words and inexplicable innuendoes, dwelling only on her beauty, sprightliness, and grace, so fresh in my memory still. "Lionelle is dead?"

"She died a few years after the date of our sojourn here in your company, and died, as I fully believe, on the eve of a splendid triumph."

New light now flashed on my mind. I began to discern what Lionelle's playful vaunt might mean. She had been, then, an actress, and throwing herself heart and soul into ideal characters, might well boast exemption from the ordinary doom, in a certain sense, of a bright, an enviable immortality—the radiant impersonations into which the born artist throws herself, the embodied Juliets, the Rosalinds, the Ophelias of the poet's creation—may not these fittingly wear flowers of amaranth, serpents self-entwined, since they live for ever? I realised now Lionelle's impersonal gaiety, her aloofness from everyday feeling and passion—how, whilst seeming to take part and lot in ordinary existence, her inner life, her individuality, had nothing in common with us. But the dark tragedy she had hinted at, the secret sorrow, the undying grief—what were they? I allowed Mr. Bolingbroke to prattle on.

"Triumph was undoubtedly in store for her, but a short-lived artistic career at best," he continued. "Those slender fair girls have not the coarser stuff of the artist in them. And my poor Lionelle was very unhappy—she had given her heart to a villain! Her father, an incorrigible gamester—a kind-hearted man, for all that—ruined this fellow, Lionelle's lover, in play. The poltroon cast her off, and, like the brave girl she was, she set herself the task of earning enough money to pay back the debt, thus vindicating her father's

honour and nobly revenging herself. Death overtook the dear visionary, ere her task was fairly begun."

Just then my old friend, catching sight of our host approaching, pulled himself together, put on his set smile, and became the Mr. Bolingbroke of everyday.

"Ah," cried the master of the house, breaking in upon our confidence; "you have made my guest feel at home already, I see. Mr. Bolingbroke—Mr. Gerald Archer."

The formal introduction over, my Cagliostro vacating his chair made room for our host, and quitted us, "to join the ladies," he said, smiling pleasantly.

"A most agreeable, well-informed, polished old fellow that," said my Australian. "No acquaintance, you know, a make-belief. The fact is"—and here the unsophisticated millionaire broke into a hearty laugh at his own expense—"my wife and I are so completely at sea in the matter of entertaining people and the ways of society in general, that, at the suggestion of our upholsterer, we have got a professional master of the ceremonies to set us going. You will see how he manages our first garden-party, to take place to-morrow. My belief is that it will go off capitally."

And once more he laughed. I also could not resist a smile, although my heart was heavy within me. Some selfishness was mingled with the sorrow. At least Lionelle had never belonged to another. I could call her mine still.

The garden-party—and how many other parties!—went off well, but when Mr. Bolingbroke's mission was fulfilled, and the term of his engagement had expired, I carried him off to my country home. I was not very rich, but I could afford to give the worn-out old man all that he needed—a fire to warm him, a cover laid for him, a bed to lie on for the remainder of his days.

For several years he has enjoyed the coveted privilege of having no one to entertain but himself. Long may it be his! The decayed, infirm, but invariably amiable, courteous gentleman is all I have to remind me of my beautiful Lionelle—of my Group of Immortals!

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

## CHARLES DICKENS

No. 863. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 1885.

PRICE TWOPENCE

### ONLY A BUSINESS MAN.

By MAY DRYDEN.

#### CHAPTER XL

THE eventful Tuesday had arrived, and Phoebe and Matty had donned their best apparel to go out to tea with Clarence Fenchurch. It was very simple, when all was done to it that their skill could devise. Their dresses were only soft grey merino, and Phoebe had made them herself. Yet Matty had spent an hour in her room getting ready to go. She had been very hard to please in the matter of dressing herself, and Phoebe had patiently and kindly given her much assistance in putting the finishing touches to her beautiful brown hair, and in fastening in the spray of ivy, which was all the adornment they could afford. Matty was tall and handsome, and her fair, fresh face showed so much life, so much genuine capacity for enjoyment, that it was no wonder her sister surveyed her admiringly before she went to make her own toilet.

That was soon completed. Phoebe felt a strong inclination to linger over it to-night, but she put it from her with a sigh.

"I am too old for that sort of thing," said she half aloud, and turning away from her glass.

Poor girl! It had shown her a little wrinkle, lining itself out on her forehead. It was a very little wrinkle, so tiny that probably no one else would have seen it; but she saw it, and, for the first time, felt a little pain at her heart that she should be growing so old.

No one saw her trouble; how should anyone guess it? The Phoebe who came so quietly downstairs, attired in her soft grey dress, was, to all appearance, just the

same gentle, sedate Phoebe to whom all her family had been used to look up for so many years. If the little hand that rested on Luke's arm trembled, he thought only that his sister was nervous about going among strangers. But, unsuspected even by herself, a change had crept into the heart of the girl. Perhaps the truth was that, at an age when girls usually begin to perceive that their youth is passing from them, Phoebe was beginning to grow young; to feel, for the first time, something of that hope, and fear, and longing which awake such tumult in most young hearts. She knew that she was uneasy, but did not know why, and thought her discomfort arose from the fact that she was going out to spend an evening for the express purpose of enjoying herself, and was by no means sure that she was doing right.

However, she could not long be uncomfortable in the presence of such kindly people as her host and hostess—people who were exerting themselves to their utmost to put her and Luke at their ease. Even Gordon, whose sadness and gravity had frightened her, and whose painful intensity of manner had troubled and puzzled her, ceased to be dreadful in her eyes when she saw the gentle affection of his behaviour to his sister, and the freedom and confidence with which Clarence treated him.

There was no other guest besides herself and her brother and sister, and no extensive preparation had been made for their reception. But the simple tea, served in that dainty, cozy study, was the pleasantest meal Phoebe had ever sat down to. She loved pretty things quite as well as Clarence did, though she could not gratify her taste for them, and when, tea being over, Gordon drew a comfortable low chair to the fire for her, and placed a cushion at her back, she rested in it with an indescribable feeling

of comfort and of contentment with her surroundings. The little wrinkle disappeared from her forehead as she talked—actually talked to Gordon as easily as though he had been Luke, forgetting, in the interest of the conversation, to feel shy or constrained, and therefore entering into it with captivating earnestness and intelligence.

Presently Gordon asked her what she thought of the alterations he was making in Wilton.

"Indeed," said she, "I know very little about them. I meet the girls going to and from the mill sometimes, and I like to see them, they look so happy; and I like their white aprons and the pretty fashion they have of wearing their shawls over their heads. But I do not think they like to meet me."

"And why do you not think so, Miss Carfield?"

"Well, they are not very polite; they stare at me, and laugh, and mutter as I pass. Once or twice they have crowded me off the pavement into the road, and I do not think it was by accident."

"They have not good manners, I know, but I hope you will not judge of them by what you see of them so casually. Their rudeness is their way of asserting their independence, of saying 'I am as good as you.' They do not know that they only lower themselves by it; and, indeed, Miss Carfield, it is in a great measure our fault that they do not know."

Gordon advocated the cause of his mill-hands with an earnestness as great as though they had been his nearest friends. Consciously or not, he infused that earnestness into every sentence, however trifling, that he addressed to Phoebe. No doubt this was partly the result of his usual habit of regarding very small things as serious, also partly of his desire to interest this new acquaintance of his. He watched her as he spoke, and liked to see the grave face flash, and the quiet eyes sparkle, as he talked. He liked Phoebe, and felt a growing wish to excite her sympathy with his plans and hopes. Gordon's was a nature which stood in great need of sympathy, which, nevertheless, he rarely obtained, since very few people understood what was his real aim in life. And, though Phoebe did not know it, he had already excited this desired sympathy in her mind. She already felt sorry for him, though she knew not why; sorry to see his thin, sad face—so very sad in repose. She felt pleasure in seeing him

brighten and look pleased, and was conscious, though half ashamed, that she was studying his wishes in what she said, and felt gratified when he expressed approbation of her opinions. Now she replied:

"Indeed, I do not wish to judge them hastily. But I wish we were better friends. I should like to know more of them."

"You are right. That is the only way, and when you come to know them, you will find that they have many sterling good qualities in spite of their rough exteriors. It is principally a certain misdirected pride that makes them so ill-mannered. For my own part I would rather have their blunt self-assertion than the cringing toadyism of the south-country labourer—it is far more capable of amendment."

"If only I had time for making new friends, there is one of these girls I should particularly like to know. She seems to me so nice. She dresses just like the others, and yet even her dress looks different in some way from theirs. She is very tall and very handsome, with lovely dark eyes, and though she cannot be more than eighteen or nineteen, she looks so grave."

"That must be Deborah Leighton. Yes, she is well worth knowing, but she is one girl in a hundred. Nay, I doubt if there be anywhere such another girl. I am greatly depending on her to help me in my numerous schemes."

"What schemes, Mr. Fenchurch?"

"Ah, I cannot tell you now, though I would like to do so. It would take too long, and, listen—Clarence is going to sing."

Clarence had a good voice, which had been well cultivated. It had been a delight to her during many an hour which would, but for it, have been passed in anxious expectation of her brother. She sung a little song charmingly now, but, nevertheless, Luke, who had expected a great deal from her, was disappointed. She detected his vexation in the tone of voice with which he thanked her, and asked him how he had liked the song.

"Not much," said he simply. "I do so dislike songs about flowers, and bowers, and loves, and doves, and dreams, and streams. The fact is, a great many songs which are very popular seem to me perfectly inane."

The words were not polite, but his manner was so perfectly void of offence, that Clarence never thought of being annoyed. She only turned over her music to try to find something more to his taste.

"Give us The Poacher's Widow, Clarence," said her brother.

She obeyed at once. In singing her first song, her voice, which was a pure, sweet soprano, had rung out with a glad joyousness and a perfect correctness such as are rarely heard from any save a feathered songster, but it had been utterly empty of any touch of deeper feeling. Luke was not prepared for her exquisite rendering of the song which Gordon had selected for her, and which she sang as none could sing it who did not appreciate the pathos of the words. When she finished and looked round, she was surprised to see him standing motionless at her shoulder, his fine eyes filled with tears. She was surprised, not that the song should affect anyone who heard it for the first time, but because she had made up her mind that Luke Carfield, however good he might be, was too heavy and dull to experience any of the finer emotions.

She rose gently, and walked across the room to Phoebe.

"Were you not talking of Deborah Leighton?" she asked. "She is a great friend of mine, and is coming to-morrow to see me, and to get some books I promised her. Could you not come too, Phoebe? I will introduce you."

"I should like it very much," said Phoebe; "but——"

The sentence was never finished, for that moment the servant brought in a message:

"Mr. Everett Fenchurch, sir, waiting to see you."

Gordon made a wry face.

"Just my luck!" said he. "Something is sure to turn up if I am enjoying myself. My butter-cake always falls butter-side down."

He went away, and in a few minutes returned with his brother.

Phoebe noticed that in those few minutes every particle of joyousness had left his face. She noticed, too, the anxious glance that Clarence gave him, though she strove to be as bright as before, and she wondered what there could be in the presence of this splendid-looking elder brother to cause the host and hostess uneasiness. For Mr. Everett Fenchurch—in reality Mr. Fenchurch—was a grand man to look at. Rather taller than his brother, with apparently much more physical strength, he had all his grave sweetness of expression; he held his head erect, his hair was abundant, but iron-grey in colour. His voice was sweet and low, without any of

the Lancashire accent now and then observable in Gordon's. His every remark was evidence of fine culture or deep thought.

Phoebe was fascinated, and Gordon, in spite of his anxiety, was pleased to see her evident admiration of Everett. He had not lost his own admiration for his brother. Staniland and Mark had never forgiven the faults they had found in him. Eleanor, the elder sister, had not seen him since their father's death, but Gordon—Gordon the money-maker, the business-man—found always a soft place in his heart for the weak, erring, yet dearly-loved elder brother, who never scrupled to come to him for assistance in all his difficulties, and, with a simple-hearted selfishness almost sublime in its utter blindness to the feelings of his helper, would wind up an appeal for pecuniary assistance with a lecture on the danger of setting the heart on worldly prosperity.

Still, to-night, Gordon's anxiety and trouble were so marked that Luke and Phoebe hastened to take their leave of him and Clarence, and with Matty, who would have been content to have waited another hour, returned home. Not, however, before Clarence had assured them all that she meant to see much of them in the future.

"I always get my own way," said she; "remember that, Matty, my dear, and impress it on this wise little sister of yours. Or is she your grandmother, Matty? Am I labouring under a delusion, and is she sixty-three instead of twenty-three? If so, pray undeceive me that I may treat her with proper respect."

"Ah," answered Phoebe, "you are laughing at me; but wait until you know what it is to have five boys to look after; you will look grave, too, then."

"I dare say; one is more than I can manage. But then Gordon is such an anxiety to me. He is so wild and headstrong; always getting into scrapes."

"Clarence, Clarence, stop talking nonsense!" said her brother; "you are quite mystifying Miss Carfield. See, she is more than half inclined to believe you."

Never had Phoebe known such pleasure as she had enjoyed on this evening. It would have been happier—I will not say better—for her had she remained in ignorance of it all her life. If "by their fruits ye shall know them" could be applied to our hours of pain and pleasure, they would often change places in our estimation. The seed of Phoebe's tree of life was sown

that evening, and, sweet as the seed was, the tree bore very bitter fruit.

## CHAPTER XII.

WHEN the door closed on his guests, Gordon Fenchurch returned to the room where he had left his brother and sister. Then he drew a chair to the table, and putting his arm on it, supported his head on his hand.

"Now, Everett," said he, "I am ready. Clarence dear, go to bed; Everett will stay to-night. No need for you to lose your rest."

There was utter bitterness and weariness of spirit in his tone. Clarence's heart sank as she heard him. She perceived, and suffered in, every pang of anxiety and grief that wrung Gordon's heart. She had hoped so much for him from his friendship with the Carfields; he had seemed so much better and happier since they knew them, and here he was utterly cast down and overwhelmed again. She ventured a faint remonstrance as she said "Good-night."

"Everett, you will not let Gordon stay up late, will you? He is so tired."

"My business is easily settled," said Everett pleasantly. "Good-night, my dear; you must not make this silly boy imagine himself not strong, or, if he is really delicate, try to persuade him to give up some of his business-ties. They are what wear him out, not an occasional chat with his brother."

"Everett," said Gordon impatiently as Clarence left the room, "how can you be such a fool? What do you imagine is to become of you, and of Mark, and Staniland, and the children, too, if I give up business?"

"My dear boy, I do not want you to give up business; I only want you not to let it engross your every thought, all your time, as you do now. Gordon, I fear you are imperilling not only your bodily health by your devotion to money-making, but your spiritual welfare also, which is a much more important thing."

Gordon, in whom his brother's words roused an undisguisable irritation, rose and paced up and down the room. Everett continued his speech with increased severity:

"Gordon, is it true that you were transacting business last Sunday?"

"What on earth does it matter to you?"

"I must do my duty by you, Gordon.

They tell me you hardly ever go to church here."

"No," said Gordon, standing still and speaking emphatically; "no; nor do I intend to go to church here. I am not going to turn hypocrite to please anybody, and I find no religion in going to church. Do you know who are our parsons here? The vicar is addressed as 'my lord,' and is too great a man to call on his parishioners save in the character of a priest. The curate spends so much money in trying to ape my lord's style of living that he cannot pay his bills, and many a poor tradesman who comes humbly on Sunday to hear God's word from his mouth, spends half his church-time in wondering whether the reverend gentleman will pay him what he owes him next week. And these men consider themselves anointed to preach the Gospel to the people—Heaven forbid that they should really be so!"

"Gordon, Gordon!" cried Everett in a voice full of emotion; "do you know what you are saying? You are talking rank heresy."

"Well, enough of it," said Gordon impatiently. "I imagine you did not come over here from Rochdale on account of my spiritual welfare or illfare. What do you want me to do for you?"

"I am not aware that I said I wanted you to do anything for me," said Everett haughtily.

Gordon looked at him with some surprise, and in a changed tone rejoined:

"Then I beg your pardon, Everett. I am very glad all is right with you."

"Nay, I never said that all was right. You jump too quickly to conclusions."

"Everett, once for all, will you have done with this shilly-shallying, and say right out what you are come for. Of course you want something done. If you want me to do it for you, you must tell me honestly what it is."

"I hardly know. I am in a worse confusion as regards my affairs, Gordon, than I ever was in before. I have been very unfortunate."

"In fact, you have been speculating again. How often must I tell you, Everett, that it needs a keener head than yours to speculate with any prospect of success?"

"You could hardly call it speculation this time, Gordon; it was almost certain."

"What was almost certain? Now, Everett, will you tell me what you have been doing?"

"Well, Gordon, the long and short of it is this—if I cannot have six thousand pounds by Tuesday next, I must fail. There will be nothing else for it."

"How have you managed it?"

"I have been buying cotton largely. It was so low. Only five three-eighths. It seemed to me, and would have done, I imagine, Gordon, to any reasonable person, that it was sure to rise."

"When was this?"

"A month ago."

"And now it stands at five, and may sink lower yet. When will you learn, Everett, that you have neither the nerve nor the brain for ventures of that sort?"

"A mishap must happen to every business man sometimes."

"I beg your pardon, it must not. I tell you, frankly, it is simply dishonest for you to do this sort of thing. You have not the nice perception of the signs of the times that is necessary for it; and you are too proud to consult those who have. I have held no more raw material than was absolutely necessary for three months past. And, now, what do you expect me to do for you? You know that I cannot lend you the money myself; and that, last time, Stan and Mark declared it should be the last time."

"Can you not persuade them, Gordon?"

"No; and I will not try. They owe a duty to their families, and have no right to throw their money away."

"You know I should repay every penny."

"I know nothing of the sort. Nay, Everett, I am sorry to pain you; but you will not pay off one debt by piling another on to it. And you have never repaid the money we lent you two years ago."

"Well, then, Gordon, lend me the money yourself. You have no family."

Gordon was silent for a moment and thought, then spoke again.

"How can I? I have but three thousand pounds ready money that I could let you have. It will cripple me dreadfully to part with that."

"Well, then, mortgage this house, and let me have the money. Gordon, upon my word, I will pay you again within six months."

"Mortgage my house!"

"Yes; why not? I would do more than that for you, if you asked me."

"If I asked you! That is a safe promise, Everett. Mortgage my house! Why, I hate the idea of a mortgage. I hate to be in any way dependent on any man."

"Very well, Gordon. So be it. You take your stand with Mark and Staniland, and I am one brother the poorer—that is all. I ought to have known that you, above all, were unlikely to value your brother's good name at a higher price than your money."

"Everett, Everett, you will drive me wild! How can you be so abominably unjust? Your good name! Why have you put it in any man's power? You must not ask me for an answer to-night. I think you hardly know what you are asking me to do. I will tell you to-morrow morning."

"Very well; then I will go to bed now. I am tired and sleepy. This constant anxiety is very tiring, and I am sure, Gordon, so much excitement cannot be good for you. Take my advice. Take things more easily; diversify your occupations; read, think, take more outdoor exercise."

"Good-night, Everett," said Gordon, scarcely able to restrain his irritation so as to speak civilly.

"Good-night. Now go to bed, and sleep off all your worry, my dear boy."

Go to bed—to sleep! Nay, there was no sleep for Gordon that night. To and fro, to and fro he paced—thinking, planning, calculating. Now and then he paused at the table for a few minutes, and scribbled a few figures, then resumed his angry tramp. With every turn he took his difficulties seemed to become more enormous. What guarantee had he that this would be the last time that Everett would come upon him? How could he conceal what he had done from Mark and Staniland, who were sure to condemn him? For, that Everett must be helped, he had already made up his mind.

The weight of his trouble seemed almost to become something tangible, present in the room with him; he felt unable any longer to think justly or consecutively, and yet utterly unable to go to rest.

At length he left the room, not for his own, but for his sister's. He tapped at her door, and she opened it instantly, showing herself clad in her blue dressing-gown, her long hair rippling over it, her grey eyes moist with unshed tears.

"I was not asleep, my darling," said she. "I have been waiting for you."

Gordon, it is past three o'clock. Are you not quite worn out?"

"Quite," said he in a low tone.

"Go to bed, then, dear, and I will come and read to you."

"No, I cannot. I cannot be left alone any more to-night, Clarence. Come downstairs with me, dear; I cannot lie down. Some day, Clarence, I think I shall go mad."

"No, dear—no. You are overwrought now. Come downstairs, by all means, if you prefer it."

And so, arm linked in arm, the brother and sister descended again, and in the dainty study by the flickering firelight Clarence tended Gordon until the morning came—reading to him, singing to him, smoothing his heated brow with her cool white hand; now watching breathlessly as he seemed about to sink into sleep; now listening patiently to his account of his trouble, eagerly agreeing with his passionate denial of any love of money, reassuring him in his doubt concerning his own motives, striving to banish his self-distrust, and convince him of her own love and admiration for him. At last, as the first rays of sunlight stole into the room, he slept, his head thrown back in his chair, his thin, pale face looking white against the dark cushion as death itself. One hand still held Clarence's firmly, as though he feared to miss the one being on this earth who had faith in him. For an hour the sister sat and watched the brother, with a heartache for his grief which was positive pain. Then he awakened, weak and tired truly, but calm and self-possessed, and penitent for having kept Clarence up. He sent her to bed, and then sought his brother to tell him that he would give him the necessary aid on one condition—namely, that he should promise to speculate no more.

Everett was quite willing to give the promise. Gordon would have been better pleased had he been less willing—had he desired a little time for consideration before passing his word. He seemed to think it a matter of such small importance, that it was to be feared that should any time of temptation come, he would think it a matter of small importance then, and repeat his past follies so long as was possible.

If once a man gets it into his head that he is a good business man, there is nothing more difficult than to convince him to the contrary, even though repeated failure should be proof against him.

## SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

### OUR GREAT HOUSES.

ANYONE who glances at the map of Folkshire will see, from the many green patches dotted thereon in the neighbourhood of Shillingbury, that our district is well supplied with resident gentry. We can boast of no huge piles like Blenheim, no historic monuments like Alnwick or Raby, but we can hold our own for solid comfortable mansions of the Jacobean or early Georgian eras.

When I was a boy my father often made me the companion of his drives, and I well remember with what pride he used to point out Sir Thomas A.'s hall there, and Squire B.'s mansion here, remarking that the county couldn't be such a very bad one, otherwise the gentlefolks wouldn't have built their houses in it. Then it seemed to me that the prosperity of those goodly houses was as assured as that of the Bank of England; but now that I am growing old I begin to fear that their foundations, both in plain speech and in allegory, have been laid on the sand, and that in the times to come another generation of ruined manor-houses may be added to the attractions of rural England.

Our only recognised English ruins are for the most part structures of a very respectable age—giant wrecks of the baronial era, girt now and then with the more graceful and pacific growths of later time; stately pleasure-houses of the reign of Elizabeth, built when our rude forefathers had learnt some of the secrets of soft Italian life, and adorned their houses with carved wood and many-coloured marble; and abbeys and priories, whose ruins now form the sole attraction of remote country towns. Time has, in most cases, blotted out the record of the architects who reared them; the names of these cunning men have passed into oblivion long before the ruins of their works are in danger of perishing. Indeed, in those days, when the doctrine and practice of the division of labour was imperfectly understood, it was not always easy to say where the duties of the master-mason ceased and those of the architect began; but in our modern times the records are more precise, and the lines more sharply drawn.

I have been led to indulge in these reflections from divers observations I made not long ago during an autumn visit to my native soil. Then, from what I saw and heard, the conviction was forced upon me

that we shall have, ere long, a set of ruins for which the local guide will be able to supply the architects' names and divers other interesting details of days comparatively recent. If my father could have been with me during my late journey he would have had to recall his boast about our resident gentry, for I found more empty houses than full ones. Houses are built to be dwelt in; the house fabric, let it be second or third class work even, has a wonderful tendency to hold together, but rats, and rains, and winds will work terrible havoc in a century of absenteeism. If the house-master be in residence he will, out of due regard for his own health and the avoiding of colds, and stiff necks, and mould, and mildew, keep the pest in due subjection. With a caretaker in possession he will see that the roof does not fall in, and that the rats do not entirely honey-comb the foundations; but his care will not be so watchful as it would be with the damp gnawing at his own bones, and the draughts whistling round his proper ears. Decay under such conditions will not tarry; it is indeed now working with a will in half-a-dozen or more of goodly mansions which in the days of my youth were warm houses.

I had a week to spare at the beginning of September, until I should be due at the hospitable house in West Folkshire which has opened wide its doors to me for more Septembers than I care to count, and this week I determined to spend in Martlebury, the county metropolis, and in exploring the scenes of my youth. My old home, near Shillingbury, lay some ten miles from the city, whither in the old days my father would drive every week to attend the Saturday market. On rare occasions—four times a year, perhaps—I was permitted to go with him, and never in all my after experience of travel have I entered a city so magnificent as Martlebury seemed to me then. Four miles off the tapering spire of the cathedral came in sight, and soon the roads would be full of flocks of market-bound sheep, scattered rudely now and then to right and left as some smart young farmer would dash through them mounted on a likely-looking cob. The straggling houses soon formed themselves into a street, and in this street stood The Duke's Head, a hostelry at which my father and grandfather had stabled their horses for half a century and more.

Now, I drove from the railway-station to my inn in a mouldy fly, and before I

entered its doors I had premonition of the blight which by common report had fallen upon Folkshire, urban and rural alike, in these latter evil days. The bell rang as I got out of my carriage—none of that shrill, pertinacious clatter that an electric-bell makes, but a drowsy clinkety-clink, mixed up with the creaking of the bell-wire, and of the drags and springs which controlled the engine. A strange waiter issued from the coffee-room, and the face of "Miss" in the bar-parlour was quite new to me. The appearance of a tall, spare man, now well on the downward slope of life, told me that all was not changed. Richard, the ostler, came out of the stables, and, touching his cap, began a long series of questions as to what I had been doing since he used to lift me out of the old gentleman's gig on market-days. These finished, he glided by natural sequence to the evergreen subject of the badness of the times.

I started early next morning to visit my birthplace. I am of opinion that visits of this sort are undesirable, especially when one has transferred oneself to a different level, and, for better or worse, learned to look with distaste upon one's early surroundings. Dear me! how dirty that horse-pond appeared to be, and how near and odoriferous the cow-yards! Was it possible that I could ever have regarded that narrow little stream and those few scrubby trees as veritable river and woodland scenery? Mr. Curtis, the farmer who succeeded my father, was standing leaning over the garden-gate as I drove up. I knew very little of Mr. Curtis, for there had been some disputes about valuation at the change of tenancy, and our intercourse with our successor had been scanty, and not over- cordial; but this all happened many years ago, and when I explained to Mr. Curtis who I was, he shook hands heartily, and said he was glad to see me. I found out, before I left, that he was a most inveterate gossip, and, on that account, would doubtless have welcomed my advent had I come of a family ten times more obnoxious.

I had a long chat with Mr. Curtis, all in the familiar strain. Everybody connected with farming was on the high-road to ruin. This I had heard many a time before, and quite expected to hear it again from Mr. Curtis; but there was in his tale of woe a lower depth than any I had yet fathomed. If everybody went to the workhouse, who would be left to pay the rates? If I could



answer that question, I would be a cleverer fellow than Mr. Curtis took me for. As he propounded these terrible problems, he stared at me fixedly, with his unshaven chin on the top bar of the gate, and muttered that if he were a younger man he would be off to Australay; but he was too old for that, and must rub on the best he might.

I asked Mr. Curtis for news of the chief county people, and soon found out that his catalogue of woes was by no means exhausted. The landlords seemed to be in just as evil case as the tenants. "Wadsworth is shut up, and so is Stallington. There's no one at Lacklingby, 'cept the old lord and his keeper—you heard, I suppose, as he was gone out of his mind? And Moltering— Well, that's the worst of all. They do tell me that the roof is falling in, and that the bullocks in the park can look in at the drawing-room windows. You never see no gentlefolks a-stirrin' about here now. Just in the shootin' time there's some chaps from Lunnon and the North come down for a month or six weeks, but I don't call such as they gentlefolks."

The next morning I set out for a cross-country drive of about five-and-thirty miles to my friend's house. I knew the district well. For a score of miles or so it was little else than an uninterrupted stretch of park and woodland, one great place beginning almost at the point where another ended. The country was undulating and well watered, dry in soil, and fairly fertile, so there was nothing strange in the fact that so many great lords and large-acred squires had built their pleasure-places within its limits. Besides, it was not too near London, and in the early Hanoverian days this was by no means a disadvantage. Then the squires and the lesser nobility were largely Jacobite, and, under the new régime, did not find London a very pleasant dwelling-place; so they set to work to build themselves habitations in this quiet nook, and in many others equally remote. Even at the present time this particular corner of England is farther from London than Manchester, counting by time, and in the first years of the eighteenth century it was very far off indeed.

Stallington Hall, the oldest of the houses Mr. Curtis had catalogued as empty, used in my young days to bear a character not at all common in the ordinary run of country houses. Sir George Buck, the

then owner, had been for many years in the diplomatic service, and when he left the great world of political intrigue, he left it for good and all, contented, like the illustrious Temple and M. Candide, to pass the evening of his days in cultivating his garden. But though he withdrew himself from the great world, he by no means forbade the great world to trespass into his seclusion. Often we used to hear of Cabinet Ministers, and foreign Dukes and Princes, being guests at Stallington, and sometimes famous painters and literary men, for Sir George was a grand seigneur of the best type. Mr. Muddiford, our rector, was a frequent guest; and next to dining at Stallington, he liked best to describe the recent feast to divers of his parishioners in the course of his daily walk. He, good, easy man, loved his dinner and his ease, and he loved a lord too, but the lord should be a lord of English growth, and he was not always pleased with the Dukes and Counts of foreign countries he might meet at Sir George's board. I well remember his observations on one particular dinner. "Yes, Lord Medlicott was there. He's a nice young man, in some respects, but not the man his father was. They tell me he took a high degree at Oxford, though how a man can be said to take a good degree without being a high wrangler, I confess I don't understand." The rector was of the sister University. "He talked all dinner-time to a German count or baron, or something, and afterwards spoke to hardly anybody, except to a person named Pendleton, who, I understand, is a poet. I don't believe he addressed half-a-dozen words to me, though during his father's lifetime I never missed taking the vice-chair at the Medlicott Agricultural Association dinner. And old Pendleton, I never came across a more insufferable old fellow. He sat next to me, and—would you believe it—he fished every oyster out of the sauce-boat when it was handed to him, and left me nothing except the melted butter!"

As a matter of fact, Sir George Buck's housekeeping, elegant as it was, was not to the county taste. An English gentleman, so the proverb ran, ought to mix with English gentlemen, and the county held that Sir George was hardly doing his duty in filling his house with Counts and Barons, Russian and Prussian; with painters and literary folk; and—breathe it softly!—now and then with actors and actresses. Such tastes could only come from the cor-

rupting influences of foreign Courts, and when Sir George died, and his distant cousin, Mr. Pott Sherd, came into possession of the fine old place, everyone looked for the establishment of a ménage more in accordance with the best traditions of the county.

Mr. Pott Sherd was a young gentleman of robust health and weak head, who had fallen under the influence of what was then known as "the Tractarian movement." A college friend of his had entered the Church, and, soon after this step, had taken up, as an extra article of religion, that the spiritual salvation of the East End of London depended entirely on the establishment there of a new church with a ritual far in advance of anything then going, he himself to be the high priest thereof. This proposition he laid down in season and out of season; but to no one did he preach it so persistently as to his old college friend. Of course he had very soon a subscription-list in full working order, and this Mr. Pott Sherd headed with a handsome sum. And had he done no more, no evil might have befallen him; but, as is not seldom the case in ecclesiastical building, the contractor's bill, before the church was completed, exceeded by a very large sum the amount of the subscription-list, and the contractor, a commonplace person, without a particle of zeal for deepening the spiritual life in Whitechapel, refused to go on with the work till he got his money, or a guarantee for the same. This guarantee Mr. Pott Sherd gave, and he gave it in such loose terms—there was no need to waste money on a legal document between friends, the divine affirmed—that the contractor went merrily to work again, and would come every day to the rector with some new suggestion for accentuating the structural symbolism of the sacred fabric, and elongating his little account. The end of it was that Mr. Pott Sherd had to hand over four or five thousand pounds, just at the time when a heavy succession duty was making a big hole in his income, and family increase was demanding the erection of a new nursery. There was nothing left for it but retreat. The Sherd family, I heard, were living at Stuttgart, and Stallington, with the shooting, let to a sporting stockbroker, who came into residence for six weeks in the autumn, importing his provisions, and his society as well, from the metropolitan market.

Lacklingby—the grandest house in the

district—if not shut up, was next door to it. Its master, having tried to live the life of a man about town of the Regency with the weakest of constitutions, found himself a confirmed invalid at thirty, and ten years later a hopeless wreck, imbecile in mind and body. Lacklingby at his death will pass to another great lord, a collateral cousin, who has already more houses than he knows what to do with, and it will then either go to swell the list of empty houses or sink to the level of a shooting-lodge.

But, bad as is the case of these two fallen houses, their case is prosperous when compared with Moltering, the family seat of the Murconts. Every schoolboy, I suppose, in these days knows something about Sir Thomas Murcont, who held all sorts of remunerative offices under the Crown in the good old days when there was no meddling press, and no slavish system of control over the spending of the public money. Sir Thomas never made any show of public virtue—nor of private either, if all the stories about him are true—and in his own day men seemed to have had a notion that money, in passing through his fingers, had a trick of sticking to them; for I can well remember how the old gardener, who acted as cicerone the first time I went over the place, told us with a grin how this wing had been built out of the Treasury, and that out of the Post Office, repeating a gibe which had doubtless come down from his great-grandfather's time.

If Sir Thomas had built his house by questionable methods, he at least knew how to set about his work, for a more comfortable-looking, homelike house did not stand in all the county. It was square and massive, as a house should be which has to stand the assaults of our English winter; but it was well proportioned and relieved by beautiful and appropriate details—a succession of grassy terraces ran round it, adorned with flower-beds and fountains, and bounded by a noble range of stone balustrade save where the garden ran down to the lake. In the adjoining park stood some of the finest timber in Britain.

Sir Thomas Murcont, as is well known, became in his latter days Earl of Ness. He was not happy in his family, nor did his successors fare much better in this matter, for not one of these ever lived on friendly terms with his heir. Father and son, brother and brother, uncle and nephew, always found something to quarrel

about; but no quarrel was ever fraught with consequences so fateful as that which raged between Leonard, fifth Earl, and his son, to whom the place now belongs. It will concern us nothing to enquire how it arose, and who was the aggressor. The son cursed his father's memory, and swore that he would never cross the threshold of the house again. As soon as it became his own he began to dismantle it, leaving the tooth of time to work the destruction that he could not work himself without spending too much over the process.

It was on the late afternoon of a chilly day in early autumn that I walked over from the neighbouring town to satisfy myself whether the ruin fallen upon Molterling Hall was really as great as rumour declared it to be. I went to the main entrance for admission to the park, but there I found that a brick wall had been built between the piers, where once hung a pair of massive iron gates. A little farther on, in a breach of the park-palings, hung a common field-gate, and this I discovered was the practicable entrance to Molterling Park. A deeply-rutted wheel-track led over the grass to the house, and this I followed till it brought me to the borders of the lake.

I halted when I reached the margin of the sheet of water, now all overgrown with duckweed. A fallen poplar, wrecked in some winter gale, lay stretched beneath the surface with branches sticking out here and there, dead and withered like the skeleton arms of some giant of the mere. The turf all round the edge was trodden into shapeless deformity by the cattle as they came down to water, for the whole park was let as grazing-land to a neighbouring farmer. At the top of the opposite slope the house stood, with its handsome proportions still undefaced; but half the glass in the windows was broken, and on the ground-floor the frames and the wood-work had gone to ruin. A portion of the stone balusters at the end of the lake had been removed, so as to give the cattle free access to the flower-gardens. Flower-gardens! already there were no flowers, and soon the last trace of the work which had made it once the fairest garden in the county would vanish under the combined assaults of time and neglect.

I had some trouble to pluck up courage enough to ascend the slope, and take a nearer view of the desolation of the noble house. As I walked up, a steeper bit of turf now and then would tell me where a

terrace had run; and now and then some of the hardier annuals, fighting for existence against the grass and weeds, peeped up through the wreck in the places where once the flower-beds had been laid out. The splendid portico which stretched along the whole front of the house had been fenced in with rough boards, and now served as a cattle-shed. Great squares of the black and white marble pavement had been trodden out of place, and lay in disorder, and the house itself would long ago have also been invaded by the cows and bullocks if the front door had not been boarded up. All down the walls black stains descended from the eaves, showing that the water-pipes were choked up, and foreshadowing a speedy fall to the roof itself.

I looked in through one of the empty windows. The door of the room inside, as well as every other door in the house, had been removed and sold to a local builder, so I could see through into another and another, onward in ghostly perspective, through more rooms than I could count, to the other side of the mansion. In one room the flooring was decayed, and the rats had scraped up a great heap of earth and mortar. I was tempted to clamber in and wander through the deserted passages, in hope of seeing a ghost, for this was surely the place to see one, if such things are to be seen at all. I was just on the point of entering, when I heard a step near me, and, coming round the corner of the house, I saw a decrepit old man, probably the sole human being in this place. At first I thought I would speak to him; then I remembered that if I did I should have poured into my ears the whole story of the bad case into which Molterling had fallen, and of the ruin impending over the country generally. I felt I had heard enough songs in this key for the present, so I turned on my heel, and made my way as quickly as I could back to the high-road.

And all this ruin which I had just seen was the work of less than a single generation! Molterling, to outward seeming, is a well-built house, but I doubt whether it will take so long to convert it into a ruin as has been necessary with the castles, and abbeys, and Elizabethan manor-houses which are now the dwelling-places of the owl and the bat. In a few generations, I expect, Sir John Vanbrugh, and Nash, and Gibbs, and other men of less note, will be set down as the architects of divers in-

teresting ruins. Desertion means dilapidation, and that many of the remoter districts of rural England are being deserted is a melancholy fact. London—all-devouring London—year by year claims a heavier toll from landed people, who at one time used to spend nearly all their time and their income in their own homes amongst their own people. A century—nay, fifty years ago—London was a place to be visited thrice or so in a lifetime—a place of fascination, it is true, but one to be viewed with a certain amount of fear and distrust. Nowadays the railway has made it familiar to almost everybody, and familiarity has lessened its terrors, and at the same time made more enticing its pleasures. One must go back a long time to hunt up such a parallel. It is like comparing mountain and mouse to liken the Goths in Italy to the first generation of squires who learnt to love the reek of the streets, and the sound of the chimes at midnight, better than the scent of the meadows and the skylark's morning song. In every age—from the days of the fat knight and Master Shallow to that of Jerry Hawthorn—country-bred lads have taken their fling in town; but this fling was, as I have said, usually the episode of a life, and not the general rule. Sometimes, I fancy, it was done more as a matter of fashion than for the sake of enjoyment, and that the happiest day of the jaunt was the one when the young squire would gallop homewards from the spot where he left the mail-coach, and holloa out a welcome to Ranger and Violet as they coursed down the avenue to meet him. But in our time, I fear, the day on which his successor drives over from the station in a close brougham, muffled in fur rugs, and killing the time by the consumption of cigarettes, is not nearly so joyful a one as that which sees him whirled back to his adopted flagstones. The smoke has somehow got into the country blood. The new generations have learnt to adore what their forefathers would have burnt. The old house—the cradle of the race for centuries, perhaps—is looked upon as an encumbrance. The owner to-day uses it as a shooting-box—supposing that he has ready money enough to live elsewhere—until the sharper pinch comes, and then he lets it, shooting, furniture, and all, and spends what it brings in London lodgings or Continental hotels.

The knell of the country house as distinguished from the "big place" has

sounded. In the fortunate home-counties, in the valley of the Thames, and other beauty spots of our island, it will always find tenants, but on the bleak uplands and cold clay plains of East Anglia and Mercia a house vacated by its owner will stand some time untenanted. One ray of hope there is for them—a ray shining from a dark place. Crowds of house-seekers are issuing from the hives of the north yearning for fresh air and green trees after a life of toll in the midst of smoke and squalor. Wiser these than the sons of the soil. Already many a half-ruined house and neglected estate has been brought back to its old prosperity under the management of some shrewd, clear-sighted man who has made enough money and breathed enough of the smoke of Leeds or Manchester. "The old order changeth giving place to the new," is a remark which applies to other institutions besides the Round Table.

I often wonder how it will all end, supposing that my vaticinations have any truth in them. How will the grandsons and great-grandsons of the old race of squires compare with their ancestors? Is the air of Homburg, or Nice, or Florence as kindly to the growth of what used to be called English virtues as that of an English village? No doubt the grandsons and great-grandsons of the squires of 1815 will survey the world much more extensively than did their forefathers. They will see much more of society in foreign lands, for the Grand Tour was hardly for men of their calibre, and they will be on nodding terms with a cosmopolitan crew to whom their ancestors, with full reason, would have given a wide berth. They will shake off the burthen of their home duties, and they will spend the time and money thus gained in an aimless, if not mischievous, life on the pavements of some city or other. They will not ride to hounds or care very much about a day's tramp after the partridges, but they will probably pose as pigeon-shots more or less proficient, and know something of the laws and play of poker and baccarat. It was of their prototypes in the days of Roman degeneracy that Horace wrote:

Venarique timet, ludere doctior,  
Sen Græco jubeas trocho,  
Sen malis vetita legibus alea.\*

\* Conington's trans.

Now the noble's first-born shuns

The perilous chase nor learns to sit his steed;  
Set him to th' unlawful dice

Or Grecian hoop, how skilfully he plays!

Our country people have good memories, but in such cases it is only natural that they should soon forget the face of the young squire, they who ought to know him best. Now and then, perhaps, he will pay his birthplace a flying visit, to see that the man who has hired the house and shooting is not letting it down, and that the agent has not been too complaisant to the tenants in the matter of repairs. As he whirls through the village in his post-chaise, the idlers, gossiping at the ale-house door, will hardly know him and they will most likely spend half an hour in discussing who the man with the pale face and weary eyes may be. As he jolts over the uneven road through the village with its few dozen cottages and half-dozen farms, he feels a pitying wonder that human beings can endure to live their lives in the midst of such surroundings; and as for the objects of his pity, they, on their part, will marvel just the same how a gentleman who could, if he liked, live up at the Hall and sit on the bench, should prefer to pass his time in London, or in that mysterious region known as "forrin parts."

### WHAT WAS HER STORY?

#### A PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERIENCE.

#### IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

MRS. CAMPION was giving one of her pleasant little Friday dinners, and Julius Kerr, the eminent surgeon, with Linburn, the writer, were on their way together to Kolokythia Lodge.

The story of both these men would be worth telling, as would, under certain aspects, the story of every man. Kerr had seen more of the tragedy of life than falls to most of us. Linburn's experiences in Paris and in London would have furnished the materials for a dozen romances; and, had he been content to write of men and women as he had really known them, instead of indulging in the absurd creations of his brain, he might have made a less ephemeral name in literature, and would certainly have saved his reviewers columns of scathing criticism.

But to-night Kerr and Linburn were to be spectators, not actors. They were going to eat Mr. Campion's dinner, study Mr. Campion's wife, and compare notes together afterwards.

Such, at least, was Linburn's intention. He was writing a new book, and meant to utilise Mrs. Campion as heroine. Not, of course, Mrs. Campion as she really was,

but Mrs. Campion as she appeared in the light of his own mystic imagination, which was a very different matter.

"Deal leniently with Mrs. Campion," Linburn was saying, as the two young men drove out West. "I know she has her faults, but her friendship is precious to me. She is one of the few ladies I know who dares to let her spirit beat in unison with mine."

Kerr was so well accustomed to Linburn's peculiar phraseology that it no longer struck him as ridiculous. He understood the drift of the above speech to be that Linburn was "*aux petits soins*" for the lady, and that in return she probably allowed him to read her his novels in manuscript.

"Why should I deal severely with her?" said Kerr. "I go prepared to admire everything I see and hear. Besides, after accepting the gift of a dinner, I consider it ungracious to criticise the giver."

"Ah, but I particularly want your opinion of her," answered Linburn. "To me she is as profoundly interesting as a study by an Impressionist; but, then, I know I am too emotional. I want to know how she strikes you as a man of the world."

Linburn's assumption of innocence was amusing. He had been artist and actor before he took to literature, and might be supposed to possess quite as much knowledge of the world as other people; but he cultivated mental affectation with the same assiduity he bestowed on his extremely weedy moustache, and with infinitely greater success.

"I am well aware that my opinion will not have the slightest weight with you," said Kerr; "but I confess I am anxious to see this siren, who, the very antithesis of all you professedly admire, has yet managed to subjugate you so completely."

"It is just because you will view her from such a different standpoint that I shall prize your opinion," said Linburn. "At first I fear she may impress you unfavourably. There is a certain brusquerie about her, arising from her very womanliness, which she lifts as a shield between herself and an obtrusive world. It is necessary to break down this barrier before you can taste all the tender passion of her spirit. She is a lady of exquisite susceptibility."

Kerr laughed at this, because he knew a little of Mrs. Campion from other sources.

Her "exquisite susceptibility" was said to be nothing more than a histrionic power of simulating a warmth of affection she was incapable of feeling. It was this quality which rendered her interesting to men, and which had enrolled the fickle Linburn among the number of her slaves.

"There is an impalpable charm about her," continued Linburn gravely; "a shimmer, a fragrance, a melody, which I am powerless to describe. Like the bloom on the peach, like the dust on the butterfly's wing, in attempting to apply to it the coarse test of words you lose it for ever."

"A delicate attribute, indeed!" said Kerr, laughing; "and I cannot sufficiently admire your coolness in asking me to diagnose it for you. Where the 'Lotus-lover' fails, what can you expect from a wretched Philistine like myself?"

Ever since Linburn had published *The Lover of the Lotus*, a book which had drawn down on its unblushing author's head a torrent of ridicule and abuse, he had been in great favour with Mrs. Campion. He dined at Kolokythia Lodge whenever he chose, and was allowed to bring any friend he pleased, provided, of course, the said friend was a man of some mark, and prepared to worship Mrs. Campion. It was on these terms that he had proposed introducing Kerr, and although he was sure that the young surgeon would please his hostess, he had some slight misgivings as to whether his hostess was the sort of woman to please Kerr.

"By-the-bye, has not Mrs. Campion a daughter?" asked Kerr presently, with a view to diverting the stream of Linburn's eloquence.

"Yes, she has several daughters," said Linburn; "but not one has inherited the mother's subtle charm. Its uniqueness intensifies it. To multiply it would be to divide it. Precious as the aloe, it blossoms once only in a century."

Here he thought it picturesque to breathe a gentle sigh, although he did not feel at all melancholy, but on the contrary, pleased with the neatness of the phrase he had just turned. He determined to write it down when he got home, and put it into the new book. Kerr was suddenly struck with the absurdity of his companion's language, and laughed again.

"Do talk sensibly," he said, "and see if we are going right. It strikes me we shall reach Acton if we go on much farther."

"It is all right," said Linburn, descend-

ing to matter of fact; "we are just coming to Kolokythia Lodge, a little farther on, on the left. It is agonising to inhabit a place with such a name, but she bears it nobly. It was a notion of old Campion's. He had the misfortune to be born in a Greek gulf, or island, or some other thing, and thinks it poetical to commemorate the fact on his doorposts. I will, however, do him the justice to say it is the only touch of poetry in his character."

All day the early December weather had threatened snow, and as the two young men got out of their cab, large flakes were circling slowly in the air, as if undecided whether they would descend to earth, or return for another week or two to the skies. Cabby, blowing on his fingers, foretold a heavy fall before morning, and his fares agreed that it was likely, and then hurried into the house, the door of which was held hospitably open to receive them.

On entering the drawing-room Kerr experienced the first confused and disagreeable sensation of a sudden change from cold and darkness to light and warmth. The room seemed full of people, and Kerr knew immediately that he and Linburn were late. A dull murmur of relief went round as the assembled guests at length saw a prospect of breaking their fast. Kerr was annoyed, but not so Linburn. Linburn always contrived to enter a room late. He considered he was likely to make a more indelible impression on appetites already sharpened by hunger. He laid himself out, indeed, openly for admiration, and all was grist to the mill of his vanity. He was pleased when in society he heard himself pointed out as the "Lotus-lover," but he was also pleased when strangers in the streets stared at his long, floating hair, or small boys made derisive remarks. Even the hostile reviews his friends so regularly and considerately sent him, gave him more pleasure than the senders anticipated. The world—that is to say, the small literary clique which constituted his world—was talking of him, and that was all he desired.

Filled, therefore, with a pleasant consciousness of his own individuality, he preceded Kerr into the room, and Mrs. Campion coming forward to meet him, received a more than usually fatuous smile. Kerr, looking at her with some curiosity, saw a small woman dressed in brilliant colours, wearing on her bosom and head humming-birds instead of flowers. Her dark-blue eyes, set too near together, and

her flaxen, finely-crimped hair, drawn up over a cushion and alightly powdered, gave her a touch of eccentricity not altogether unbecoming. She held out her right hand to Kerr, and at the same time gave Linburn her left.

"Dear Lawrence," she said to the latter, "when will you learn punctuality? Mr. Campion has been using horrible language! I think for your sins you shall go and cool him down."

Kerr began to apologise.

"I am sure you are not to blame," said Mrs. Campion sweetly, inwardly admiring his "masculine beauty," as she termed it. "I know Lal of old. He has never kept an appointment yet."

"Try me," murmured Linburn; "I swear I would move heaven and earth to keep it."

"The best thing to move would be your looking-glass," said the lady; "I never knew such a Narcissus. When you are my age you will not be so fond of it."

If Mrs. Campion really disliked her mirror, it struck Kerr that she must nevertheless take a good deal of penitential discipline at it, for the general perfection of her "get-up" indicated the expenditure of as much time and thought, as a writer in one of the *Quarterlies* gives to the preparation of his article in the *British Museum*.

"I think you know everyone here, Lal," said Mrs. Campion, "and I sha'n't introduce Mr. Kerr, because it is such waste of time. I'll just give him a biographic sketch of everybody, and then he'll feel quite one of us. That is Schönbein in the velvet coat and knee-breeches. Whether his stockings suggested his name or his name his stockings I am unable to inform you. He and Mr. Linburn hate each other. He considers Lal's books a plagiarism of his paintings, and Lal considers the paintings a plagiarism of the books. Both are equally unintelligible until personally explained by the authors. The lady talking to Mr. Campion is Mrs. Highbury Banks, and I very much regret he did not meet her before he met me. The little golden lady on the sofa is my dearest friend, Mimi Webster. I am going to ask you to take her in to dinner, Mr. Kerr. I should like very much to keep you for myself, but I must go down with Mr. Webster—he is such a bear if I do not take him in hand. The two little innocents sitting on the sofa are two of my girls"—here she looked at Linburn and they both laughed ("my

girls" were rather a joke among Mrs. Campion's friends; she talked of them so frequently, yet suppressed them so effectually)—"and the lady standing by them is their governess, *Mdlle. Lecœur*. By-the-bye, I don't think I have let you speak to Mr. Campion yet."

As she did not take the slightest pains to subdue her voice, these "biographic sketches" were distinctly heard all over the room.

Mr. Webster, a red-faced individual, presumably a clergyman from his dress, certainly winced at her reference to himself; but he had no excuse for being more susceptible than the rest of the world, and he had been given plenty of opportunities for getting used to Mrs. Campion's manner, which, if free from the polish of polite society, had at least the effect of breaking down all barriers of conventionality. It was useless to be conventional in the presence of a woman who would call you by your Christian-name, and tell you what she thought of you, as soon as look at you. Persons who did not like this sort of thing, and there were doubtless many who did not, could always avoid it by staying away.

Now when she ceased speaking, everyone broke into exclamations of denial and reproach; while, under cover of the noise, Kerr found himself installed by "Mimi" Webster, a pretty lady with a bushy head, who affected Botticellian attitudes.

The owner of *Kolokythia Lodge* leaned moodily against the mantelpiece, insensible to the blandishments of Mrs. Highbury Banks. He hated waiting for his dinner, and his feelings were exacerbated by finding that Linburn was the delinquent. He was not the least jealous of the young man's intimacy with Mrs. Campion, but he considered him an affected idiot, who spoke a jargon he could not understand, and who indulged in a style of dress which appeared to Mr. Campion quite sufficient grounds for his incarceration in *Bedlam*. The host expected no more pleasure or profit from the evening's entertainment than his dinner could afford him, and he saw no sense in deferring it for a person who so little understood the sacred character of the feast as to spoil his appetite by afternoon-tea, and could trifle with his digestion by eating sweets and dessert.

Mrs. Highbury Banks lay in a lounging-chair almost at Campion's feet. She was a swarthy woman, with hair à la *Grecque*, pulled low over her beetling brows. She

locked up into her host's face as she slowly continued an anecdote, which did not err on the side of over-refinement, and he struggled hard but successfully to hide the amusement with which it inspired him. He took this lady down to dinner, and thawing after a while under her genial influence, added a good deal to the noise of the party, if not to its brilliancy.

"You won't mind taking in mademoiselle, will you, Lal?" said Mrs. Campion; "you shall sit by me, you know;" and Linburn was quite ready to take in the governess as he had often done before. He found her a quiet, unassuming sort of person, who expected neither conversation or attention.

Schönbein was paired off with one of the sleek-headed, red-handed daughters of the house. He mentally registered a vow never again to put his feet under the walnut-wood of Campion's table. He was just then coming into fashion as the painter of miserable young women, apparently suffering from a mild form of cholera, but in reality intended to typify Yearning, Longing, Retrospection, or Regret. Much as he was thought of by other people, he was held in still greater consideration by himself, and to expect him to pay attention to a mere girl was to wound him in his tenderest susceptibilities.

The dining-room was arranged on scientific principles. All the light was centred on the table by a powerful lamp hanging above it. Its soft rays enclosed the guests in a circle of brilliancy, and the semi-gloom beyond offered nothing to claim the attention or attract the eye. At dinner a man should wish to look no farther than the pretty face of his vis-à-vis or neighbour, and her rippling conversation, far from drawing his thoughts from the dish under discussion, should lend it a more piquant flavour. Mrs. Campion's natural coquetry was admirably adapted to make a man enjoy his food. Instead of requiring attentions she paid them, and filled up the pauses with an amount of exuberant nonsense which kept her end of the table in excellently good spirits.

She had been a pretty and lively girl, and was now a noisy but still pretty woman. Her conversation was impeded by no scruples of politeness, prudishness, or charity. She said out whatever came into her head, and the things which came into her head were not always of an unequivocal description. But if she occasionally took her hearers' breath away, at least she never lost her

own; before they had recovered from the effects of speech number one, she had fired off numbers two and three, which were usually of so much more accentuated a nature as to render number one white by force of contrast.

When Mr. Campion first met this lady it was natural, being then himself the very pink and pattern of propriety, that he should fall a victim to the charms of her audacious tongue. It was equally natural that after marriage the first task he set himself should have been to eradicate the very trait that attracted him. But in this endeavour he was cruelly disappointed. Mrs. Campion's vow of obedience made far less impression on her mind than the fit of her wedding-gown. She listened to her husband's homilies on the excellence of meekness in a woman, with smiling lips and wandering mind, which, however, did not wander quite so far as to prevent her from mimicking the connubial sermon to the next person she met, under her husband's very nose. All that, however, was years ago. Mr. Campion no longer tried to improve his wife, or cared in any way as to what she said or did, provided his house was comfortable and his dinners good; and she for her part had ceased to find amusement in laughing at her husband. She seldom thought of him at all, and never when any other man was present.

To-night Linburn on her left hand divided her favours with Webster, sitting on her right. On the other side of Linburn was the governess, next to her Schönbein, and then Mrs. Highbury Banks. Schönbein had recovered his temper, for his insignificant little partner had been shunted to the opposite side of the table, where she now sat between Webster and Kerr. The second Miss Campion did not appear at dinner at all.

The party split up into two sections: Mrs. Banks, Mrs. Webster, Campion, Schönbein, and Kerr forming a coterie at one end; Mrs. Campion, Linburn, and Webster, a smaller but still gayer, noisier conclave at the other.

The silent governess and her silent pupil served as the dividing line.

You know the kind of dinner where the menu is good, and the wines still better; where everyone talks a great deal, but no one says anything worth remembering; where there is much laughter for very inadequate cause? So it was at Kolokythia Lodge, with this further advantage that if you drank more wine than was good for



you, you were only following the example of your host, and ran no danger of scandalising your hostess.

Under Mrs. Campion's auspices the fun waxed faster than is customary in good society. Linburn, sitting between her and Mdlle. Lecour, turned alightly away from the latter, both because he wished to talk to Mrs. Campion and because he did not wish to have anything to do with Schönbein, who was on the governess's other side. It is true there was an ill-feeling between these two young men, the real origin of which has nothing to do with the matter in hand.

With Webster, Linburn was soon engaged in a loud and shallow argument on the immortality of the soul. Neither believed enough in anything to have a stable opinion on the subject, but both were still sufficiently under the influence of old habits of thought to be tickled at the profanity with which Mrs. Campion treated it.

At the other end of the table Mrs. Webster was endeavouring to excite Mrs. Highbury Banks to combat by attacking her pet hobby, "The National Tag-dress Association," of which she was President. This was a scheme to correctly ticket the exact social standing of the lower classes, and had, as yet, besides the honorary members, only one convert—an old woman who put the price of her conversion at three shillings a week, and unlimited snuff. Now and then Campion put in a cumbersome oar on the side of Mrs. Banks, which gratified the lady, but materially damaged her cause.

Linburn enjoyed himself thoroughly; poetic creature as he was, he could still appreciate the pleasures of the table, and the subtle aroma of Mrs. Campion's presence added the refining sentiment. Nevertheless, he found more than one opportunity to look over at Kerr, and each time it struck him that Kerr was unusually silent. Linburn was surprised and vexed. He knew that it was rather a notion of Kerr's to make himself all things to all men, but now, to-night, he was not even taking the trouble to please Mrs. Webster. He sat gloomy and silent, staring at his plate, or else abstractedly over in Linburn's direction. Once Linburn tried to catch his eye, to admonish him by a frown that he was showing off very badly, but before he could succeed in doing this, Mrs. Campion had again claimed his attention, and so for the moment Kerr's extraordinary taciturnity passed out of his head.

## SIMON'S BAY, CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

THERE is, perhaps, no coast in the civilised world so often passed, and so very seldom landed upon, as the north-east shore of False Bay, Cape of Good Hope. An unbroken chain of arid mountains, called the Hottentot Holland range, reaches from Cape Hangklip—the extreme southern point of land—to the head of False Bay, with only two little spots, Pringle and Gordon Bays, where there is any pretence of being able occasionally to land. The entrance to False Bay, between Cape Point and Hangklip, is about sixteen miles wide, the bay running northward inland nearly eighteen miles. There are, however, few good anchorages in this vast and nearly landlocked expanse of water, it being exceedingly deep close up to the north beach—more than twenty fathoms, with a foul bottom, being found within a stone's-throw of the desolate, sandy shore, upon which a heavy surf eternally beats, even on the calmest day. Gordon Bay is very open and unsafe, a rolling swell always setting in; while the Strand, a fishing-station two miles from Gordon Bay, is not much more hospitable. A circle of sunken rocks, however, forms a boat-harbour at this place, with a narrow, risky entrance, bristling with sharp pinnacles. In old days, many a hazardous expedition was made to the Strand, in the old yellow launch, or a "De Horsey"-rigged pinnace, by the young officers of the ships in Simon's Bay, for the sake of the bright eyes, and hearty, home-like welcome, ever to be found at Zandvliet, hard by. On one occasion, a midshipman of the *Boscawen*, now a post-captain R.N., walked from Simon's Bay to Zandvliet round the heavy sands at the head of False Bay, arriving after nightfall, weary and footsore after his lonely tramp of forty miles. He had been nearly swallowed up by a quicksand en route, but what did that matter, as long as he got to Zandvliet?

Following the loose sandy beach round to Kalk Bay, a very tolerable landing, protected by jutting-out rocks, is at last found for the first time in near upon forty miles. I remember a shipwrecked and starving crew pulling in their boat for two days and nights, in a gale of wind, all round the apparently hospitable and friendly harbour, from Hangklip to Kalk Bay, before being able to effect a landing.

Kalk Bay is a pretty, healthy little spot—the Brighton of the Cape, now connected with Cape Town by a railway. A strong smell of seaweed, borne on the fresh sea-breezes, greets you with great pungency on arrival here, and is considered part of the cure. From the Muysenberg to Fishhoek Bay, the hills rise up abruptly from the sea, leaving only just room for a narrow road, and this is often obstructed by huge stones which are displaced from above and roll down. On the hard, glistening sands of the four beaches horses love to scamper as hard as they can tear, except on the long Muysenberg beach, where the road does not follow the sea. Here lurk many treacherous quicksands, in one of which a waggon and eight oxen are known to have been entirely swallowed up and lost. On one occasion, when returning from Cape Town in one of the light two-wheel "carts" peculiar to the colony, we sank up to the boss of the wheel in a quicksand, and were only pulled out by superhuman efforts on the part of the sturdy, enduring little horses, and the united efforts of the whole party. It was curious to see the horses tremble and perspire while the cart was sinking in the quicksand, as if aware of a great danger. Skirting the mountain, a steep rocky precipice, leading from the road above down on to Fishhoek Sands, is known as Keppel's Folly, down which horrible declivity Sir Henry Keppel, when a lieutenant, drove a gig, one would have thought to certain destruction, were it not a fact that the gallant Admiral of the Fleet survived to perform many a doughty deed in after-days, and is still, happily, flourishing in the land. He has, however, told me that this descent, at the time he drove down it, was by no means as rocky and uneven as it has since become, worn into deep fissures and jutting-out rocky corners by the floods of fifty years. Following the beaches of Fishhoek and Elsey, the first beach leads through a turnpike, and past Admiralty House into Simon's Town.

There are comparatively few dangers in this vast sheet of landlocked water. Seal Island, in the middle of False Bay, is a low, rocky, dangerous islet, very seldom landed upon; it abounds in guano of excellent quality, and is the home of vast flocks of penguin, king penguin, and grebe, that hatch their eggs here quite undisturbed by man. The Roman Rock close by is crowned by a lighthouse, with a revolving white light visible twelve miles off. The Whittle, with fifteen feet of water above it, is a dangerous

rock, but very difficult to find when wanted, right in the fair-way off Miller's Point; there are leading marks for it, which, however, are of no use at night. The sea has also been seen to break between Seal Island and the Strand, but ships have no business there coming into Simon's Bay.

The Royal Dockyard is, of course, the feature of Simon's Bay, and the cause of its prosperity. It is one of England's great coaling-stations, and is being strongly fortified now, after having been allowed to fall into a pitiable state of decay during the last fifty years. Here are stored immense supplies of coal, which, in case of anything going wrong in the Suez Canal, or indeed when we are at war in any case, would be of enormous value. Here are mast-houses, machinery, boats, sails, anchors, cables, smithies, rope-walks, and food of every description, together with a row of cheerful houses for the officials. The floating coal-depôt is also always full, and any amount of excellent water from the fresh, wholesome reservoir on the hill-side is brought alongside in tank vessels.

Moored close in shore, in very shallow water, lest she might spring a leak and go down unawares, used to lie the old Badger, a vessel with a great history, now degraded to the condition of a mere mooring lump. More than a hundred years ago (1778), she was Lord Nelson's first command. He was at the time first lieutenant of the flagship Bristol, in the West Indies, and was appointed to the Badger by the Commander-in-chief on the North American and West Indian station, Sir Peter Parker. Commander Nelson, as he then was, felt a pride in her, it is said, such as he never afterwards experienced in any of the magnificent ships he commanded, and when, in less than a year (listen to this, ye commanders of fourteen years!), he was posted into the Hinchinbrook, the gallant and excellent man who afterwards became Lord Collingwood succeeded him in the Badger. She was a clumsy, ugly little brig, about ninety feet long, with a "square tuck," and such low decks as were rarely seen even in a slaver. How "Yellow Jack" revelled in the Badger at Jamaica, history has related. She carried four midshipmen—I often wondered where they could have been stowed—who shared the miserable space allotted to them with vast armies of rats, and cockroaches, and other "small deer." The midshipmen were young and small, just out of the nursery, and rather nervous about going aloft in the Badger.

Nelson, sympathising with them, for he had felt the same in his earlier years, would say to a poor little chap, "Well, sir, I am going to race to the masthead, and beg that I may meet you there," so aloft he went, his spindle shanks displaying the greatest activity, and in the tiny top he met his middies, who had swarmed up the rigging on the opposite side. This friendly act quite cured their alarm. A forgotten account, unknown to history, mentions that the same Badger was present in the little harbour of Nevis, under the command of Cuthbert Collingwood, when Lord Nelson was married to the beautiful and excellent woman whose deep sorrows in after-life enlist the sympathies of all right-thinking people. Prince William Henry, afterwards Duke of Clarence and King William the Fourth, was then a young officer of one of the ships in the West Indies. It was the hand of His Royal Highness that gave away the lovely young bride, Mrs. Nisbett, the niece of the President of Nevis, whose first marriage with Dr. Nisbett must have taken place when she was under fifteen, inasmuch as her son Josiah was three years old at the time of his mother's marriage to Lord Nelson, when in her eighteenth year. The Badger was built of Indian teak; but, as years passed on, it used to be a difficult matter to caulk or repair her, owing to the age of her timbers, so they adopted the expedient of filling her seams inside with Portland cement.

The dockyard at Simon's Bay is a clean, white, sandy, quiet little place in which to dwell, but always cheerful by reason of the busy hum of toiling men and ceaseless work. The large flagship and sloops of war at their moorings are a beautiful picture of still life, their sails hanging to dry, and boats ceaselessly pass to and fro all the day long. Memory recalls one sweet, still, fresh morning in Simon's Bay. A large Austrian frigate rode at anchor; she had come in at daybreak, and lay motionless, her sails mirrored in the glassy sea. Soon the stillness was broken by soft, muffled strains, and then the swelling notes of the lovely Kaiser's Hymn stole over the water, now dying away almost to nothing, now wailing forth in prayer. A dear relative lay at the point of death in a large upper room, with windows wide open to the morning air, which fanned her worn face, and awoke her out of a light dose, into which she had fallen after a night of saddest suffering. "Am I in heaven?" she asked, as the

sweet strains swelled and wafted over the sea, soft as the music of angels. Alas! no, she had yet to live and suffer for two more days on earth. The freshness and sweetness of morning at Simon's Bay, before the sun gains power, is more health-giving and lovely than can be imagined, except by those who have felt it.

There is Divine service on Sundays in the mast-house, performed by the hospital chaplain, for such smaller ships as bear no chaplain; and the mast-house is used occasionally for theatrical representations and balls on a large scale. There are now torpedo-boats kept in the boat-camber off the dockyard-jetty, for the protection of this important dépôt and coaling-station.

The patent slip for taking up ships lightened to a draught of fifteen feet, is in private hands, outside the dockyard; it is, however, more often used for Her Majesty's ships than for merchant vessels.

Simon's Town, beyond the dockyard gates, is snugly sheltered beneath its own sharp berg or mountain, seventeen hundred feet high, houses and shops lining the foot, and a road, not wholly immaculate, dividing them from the beach. On the outskirts of the town is a comfortable naval hospital, where many a weary, climate-worn sailor from the China station has been landed to die in peace, but where many have been nursed back into life by kind Dr. Shea, now dead and gone, who, for hard upon thirty years, devoted his life to long generations of sad and suffering men. It was often said that merely to see his jolly, cheery, red face enter their rooms brought into them an idea of life and vigour, while human sympathy, that rare commodity, was never failing. A doctor should certainly cultivate geniality and good health in himself, it is so encouraging.

Admiralty House, alternately the residence of a second-class Commodore, or of a Rear-Admiral, according to whether economical or other views prevail at the Admiralty, has grown from a small, low, irregular building in the passage of years to a straight, imposing edifice full of windows and comfortable rooms. A row of fine Eucalyptus, the Australian gum-tree, before the house on the road-side, was planted by Commodore Talbot in 1853, and grew forty feet in seven years. Across the high-road is the garden of Admiralty House, extending up towards the Kloof, with the river (sometimes a devastating torrent) meandering through it. This little spot is quite an oasis. Here,

from the overhanging branches of towering fir-trees, pendent nests of the golden oriole swing to and fro in the whispering wind. Here are shady walks beneath the interlaced branches of giant grape-vines; here flourishes the tiny Corinth grape without stones; while the figs, black and white, are surpassed nowhere in the world. The hedges are of heavenly blue plumbago, frail and lovely; trees of myrtle push forth their bridal-flowers all the year round; maidenhair-fern in gigantic clumps bends gracefully over the stream. People doubtless who have had a cursory glance at Simon's Town, probably with a fierce south-easter blowing pecks of sharp white sand into their eyes and mouth, will declare that I am romancing, but all these things, and a thousand more beautiful still, are to be found for the seeking by an unprejudiced eye. Another verdant and blooming garden, Hugo's, lies high up in a little valley on the slope of Simon's Berg to the left of the Dutch church, and a walk to Paradise, past the palace, will quite repay a visit of discovery. A new road was at one time projected and commenced, leading from Admiralty House across the grass-field, and down to the first beach, thus eluding the high-road and turnpike-gate, when, cutting through a raised mound, at the farther end of the field, the clean-bleached bones of hundreds of men were exposed to view, coffinless and packed close together. A search by Sir Thomas Maclear, the Astronomer Royal, into some ancient documents at the Observatory, led to the conclusion that these bones were those of the slain at the taking of the Cape a hundred years before, as it was just about this spot that a fiercely-contested landing was effected by the English. I need scarcely mention that the bones were restored to their mother-earth, and the road left unfinished.

The Kloof, to those who are equal to hopping from stone to stone, and swarming on hands and knees up the face of the rock, presents many charms. At all hours of the day, gay parties of stalwart young black and coloured women are to be seen standing cheerfully, for hours together, knee-deep in the river, chattering, laughing, and banging the luckless clothes entrusted to them with fatal vigour against the stones. At great fatigue, it is possible, by climbing up the Kloof, to gain the top of the hills above, returning by the Red Hill, but this excursion should not be attempted by feeble or nervous folk.

In olden days, when Simon's Bay teemed with rich ships of the East India Company, the "great house" was what is known to this day as "the palace," so called from having been built by a celebrated character nicknamed "King John," the foundation of whose great wealth in the closing years of the last century was the purchase of a large slave-ship, captured in the Mozambique, and brought into Simon's Bay to be condemned. Her slaves were settled at Black Town, beyond the hospital, and formed ever after a separate race. Many pure negroes may still be seen, easily recognisable from other blacks; they are milder-eyed, and their voices less harsh, while they are of considerably taller stature than the Africander. Elephantiasis, so common in Mozambique, especially at Zanzibar, has likewise developed among them, although it is comparatively rare among natives of the Cape. Most of the pitiable lepers on Robben Island, at the entrance of Table Bay, where these poor sufferers are kept isolated from the "busy haunts of man," as were the lepers of old, are the descendants of Mozambique slaves.

The hull of "King John's" slaver, after being sawn through by the Admiralty officials, before being delivered over to her purchaser, as was the invariable custom in those days—to prevent her being bought and used again in similar vile traffic—was then put ashore on the beach in a nook nearly opposite Anderson's cottage, where, at very low tide, and after a long south-east gale, several of her timbers are yet to be seen, strongly bedded in the sand, to this day. "King John," a very clever man in many ways, was an amateur carpenter of no mean ability; he used, in leisure hours, during many long years, to labour with his own hands at the work of breaking up his purchase, taking great pleasure and amusement therein. One day, among the deck beams, he came upon a double casing, which sounded hollow; on being knocked away, a vast hoard of Spanish doubloons was revealed to sight, the price, apparently, of a large cargo of slaves, at some former period of her history; perhaps the miserable beings had not been "paid for on delivery." However that may have been, the gold belonged to "King John," who had purchased "the vessel and everything that was in her," and it was with part of this treasure-trove that the palace was built.

Many years ago, when slaving was the

rule and not the exception, vessels running a cargo were extremely clever in eluding capture, and putting their pursuers off the scent. A good story is told of the flagship—Winchester, I think—going out of Simon's Bay bound to the Mauritius, when off Cape Hangklip, late one afternoon, a very rakish, suspicious-looking craft was sighted, carrying an unusual number of stay-sails and studding-sails, who, upon seeing the man-of-war, hoisted Spanish colours and her number in Marryatt's code, and requested to be reported. She passed quite close, and was, apparently, a passenger-ship of about five hundred tons burthen, for, as she neared them, about a dozen ladies, in very smart bonnets, veils, and parasols, were observed to come on deck and wave their handkerchiefs with every demonstration of cordiality to the officers of the flagship. She seemed to have also a large crew, and was very clean and smart. Suspicion was quite disarmed, and she was logged as a passenger-ship from Manilla to Cadiz. The Admiral was alone in his opinion that all was not right, remarking that the ladies waved their pocket-handkerchiefs uncommonly long and vigorously to a mere passing ship; he also thought the handkerchiefs unusually large, and further, he mentioned, that, as she passed, he was looking out of the door in the stern gallery, and a faint, curious whiff came down on the wind, reminding him of something long past. He could not remember for the moment of what it did remind him, but it suddenly occurred to him several hours after, that the faint passing odour, as the strange vessel swept by, recalled the smell of a slave-ship which he had navigated into port years before. And he was right. This same vessel was taken, off the Havanna, on her subsequent voyage, and proved to have been a Spanish ship from Fernando Veloso River, in the Mozambique Channel, full of slaves for Cuba. Her captain explained with delighted pride his meeting with the flagship off the Cape, and how, seeing a large man-of-war bearing down upon him with the certainty of capture, and no hope of escape should the ship's character be known, he adopted the clever expedient, doubtless not for the first time, of dressing up a number of their men in women's attire, a ruse that was in this instance entirely successful.

There are churches and chapels of all denominations in Simon's Town. St. Frances Church is a clean, square, plain little white building, but cool and well preserved, and

with the service always performed decently and in order. A Dutch Reformed church, a Roman Catholic chapel, and a Malay mosque, are all clean and well cared for. There are also a tidy range of barracks, a club, hotels, and a small gaol should it be required.

To the able-bodied many pleasant expeditions are possible. An easy ascent and very tolerable road leads up Red Hill. Arrived at the top a glorious panorama of land and water spreads out before your eyes. From De Horsey's Kop and the Rocking Stone—a most curious natural production, pivoted with the greatest nicety on a small point, closely resembling the Agglestone, Studland, Dorset—can be seen the whole of False Bay from its very entrance, with Simon's Bay and the ships, like little toys, stowed snugly in a bight under the dark frowning Simon's Berg.

One of the few occasions on which I have seen a splendid mirage was from this spot. We were picnicking under the shade of the tall grey rocks, when, looking towards the Hottentot Holland range of mountains, full fifteen miles away in the direction of Gordon's Bay, we beheld, not the desolate hills and sandy, nearly inaccessible beach, with that thundering surf beating for ever on its shore, but quivering and shimmering in the dry, hot air, the minarets, towers, churches, spires, and castles of a lovely white city shooting up into the sky, and unsteadily reflected in the sea below. For more than an hour the phantom town flickered and wavered in the heated atmosphere; then, as the evening drew on, it slowly melted and faded, till the hard lines of the shore and the sparsely-clothed mountains alone remained, cold and desolate as before.

Two brigs were once seen lying at anchor, apparently in Pringle Bay. It was during the time when the now long-lost Nerbudda was still looked for with hope, and when each signal that was hoisted at the light vessel—the predecessor of the lighthouse—might convey the longed-for intelligence that a "man-of-war brig was coming in," great was the excitement as one of the paddle-steamers began to get up steam, and was ordered to go across and tow the brig over, as they must certainly be in distress to have cast anchor in such an unsafe place. When, having been in view for more than an hour, they lifted, flickered, faded, and slowly melted away. It was but a mirage!

## SOME LONDON CLEARINGS.

## SOHO.

FROM Regent Street on a bright spring morning, houses and shops in sun and shade, green and red omnibuses, sparkling harness, carriages, and proudly-stepping horses; from the shops with their freshest garniture, and the crowd of people on the pavement—from all this to pass into the quietude of Foubert's Passage is to take a leap backwards fourscore years or more. Butchers' shops meet the eye, heavy with joints and festooned with smaller morsels; odd-looking little houses, low and quaint; with a bookstall at the corner, where you might fancy Elia rummaging among the odd volumes, or Coleridge lost in a shadowy reverie. A quiet market, too, is going on. Old ladies with baskets and sausage-curls are laying in their day's provisions; ancient cats sit blinking in the patches of sunshine.

It is a fitting approach this to the "enchantments of Soho"—dingy and sombre enchantments that have no power to thrill the imagination or quicken the pulse, and yet may do their gentle spiriting on a sympathetic temperament. For we have here to-day a distinct quarter of older London, which has changed very little during a century or more. To-morrow it will be different; wide thoroughfares are about to pierce the dingy old streets; the effacing fingers of the surveyors of the Board of Works are passing over the ancient landmarks. And although little may be swept away that is worth preserving, yet probably the old flavour of the place will be lost in the process.

But long may Foubert's Place be spared, Foubert's Place, the very name of which suggests the half-foreign origin of the district to which it forms the appropriate vestibule. Foubert kept a riding-school close by in the days of the Merry Monarch, whose dark, saturnine face so strangely belied his title. And this gives us pretty accurately the date of Soho as a settled part of London. Here, so late as Elizabeth's reign, were wide, open, half-common fields, where sometimes the Lord Mayor and his friends would chase a hare before dinner, to kill it, perhaps, in the rural hamlet of St. Giles. Then, as now, St. Martin's Lane was the chief thoroughfare from Whitehall to the northern suburbs. You can almost trace the route of the King—say the first James—as he rode towards his hunting-grounds, by the names of the streets on the way.

Kingsgate Street—afterwards to be made famous by Mrs. Gamp—was the gate to the King's private road across the fields, a gate which had a padlock to protect the royal track from promiscuous followers. Theobalds Road was the way the King rode towards his favourite Theobalds, his hunting-seat in Hertfordshire.

Later on, when London was fortified and entrenched by its citizens, during the civil wars, there was a strong outwork to protect the approach from Tottenham, close to the busy corner by Meux's Brewery, and a couple of redoubts occupied nearly the respective positions of Soho Square and the Royalty Theatre, from which the rampart stretched pretty directly to Hyde Park Corner. The fortified line here, however, enclosed only a sparse population. It was not till after the Restoration that Soho was laid out in streets and squares, while great lords and Court officials began to speculate in building-sites. The Duke of Monmouth, the favourite son of King Charles, set up his tent in a fine new house on the south side of Soho Square; and when, at a later date, he hazarded everything at Sedgemoor, the word for the day was given as "Soho!" It is often said that our Soho takes its name from this circumstance, but it has been clearly shown that the name was older than Monmouth's time; but whether the name was given to the district from the days of the merry hare-hunters, whose note of encouragement to their dogs, "See ho!" is thus preserved, or whether, as is more likely, it is a corruption of some still older title, it would not be easy to determine.

It is not very easy for anyone who has only a general knowledge of Soho, to find a way from one point to another, without losing ground in the progress. Suppose that you start from that familiar corner, where there is just a morsel left of the portico of old Regent's Quadrant, close by Regent's Circus, meaning to reach Mudie's Library, or the British Museum. All the streets seem to be in a conspiracy to take you out of the way; and, if you ramble in a vague, exploring manner, you will not go far before catching glimpses of bright, flashing Regent Street; a slight divergence brings you prematurely into familiar Oxford Street; while the sight of a yellow omnibus, which throws a glow upon an otherwise shady neighbourhood, brings to mind the fact that the St. Martin's Lane line of boundary is reached; while another turn or two will bring you among the stalls of the

primitive traders of Newport Market, and so to the confines of Leicester Square.

But working well within these boundaries a pleasant half-hour may be spent in Soho. Here is Golden Square, with a foreign restaurant or two lingering in the neighbourhood, suggestive of dinners à la carte, but turning out to be very much like the ordinary British dinner, and more lively suppers after the play. But the square itself has gone into business, and is like nothing else than an offshoot from the most commercial part of the City; all its comfortable old-fashioned houses turned into warehouses, where all kinds of fabrics are dealt with in a wholesale way, solicitors' offices, and so on. Golden Square leads appropriately to Silver Street, suggestive of Thomas Tiddler, his ground, while next we come to Poland Street, which dates from about the time of the first partition of Poland, when poor Poland was in people's minds, and refugees were coming to be thick upon the ground. And what continuous crops of refugees old Soho has seen since her first beginning!

Soho was quite young, and the houses of her grantees were still thick on the ground, when our blessed deliverer from a host of evils, as well as wooden shoes, brought over—with Dutch gardeners, and Dutch painters, and Dutch Dukes in embryo—a goodly supply of French Protestant émigrés. They had fought gallantly in William's battles, were paid off, and settled here and there, not a few in Soho, grizzled Captains who had been Counts and big swells in their own country perhaps, and who could boast—they did boast a little on occasion—of ancestors who had followed Norman William to conquer England, though now their fiefs and manors were exchanged for a garret in Soho. For this French emigration a chapel was established in Hog Lane, now Crown Street, a narrow, unsavoury street, just now half demolished and covered with hoardings, which opens into that busy corner of Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road already alluded to. Just opposite the end of Crown Street on the triangular group of shops by which the omnibuses stop, was St. Giles's pound, and we may recall, if we can among the hurly-burly of the streets, the open breezy common with many trackways leading here and there, and St. Giles's village among hedges and enclosures, with cattle feeding, and donkeys braying, and the pigs routing among the ditches.

The little French chapel in Hog Lane

had formerly, it is said, been a Greek church at a time when the astute traders from the Levant had settled about here in considerable numbers; although they had vanished before the days of the French emigration, leaving their name, it is said, to the Greek Street which runs out of Soho Square. The little chapel has disappeared, and its site is now occupied by a modern independent chapel; but its successor exists not far off in the French Church in Bloomsbury, and its features are preserved in Hogarth's well-known engraving of Noon.

And this suggests what is after all the characteristic feeling about Soho—its Hogarthian tone. Here you still have the background most familiar to the great humourist; the dark, plain, substantial houses whose roofs have shrunk beneath their parapets, or peer over them as a kind of amperfluous upper storey; the formal streets, with long lines of square windows, with perhaps a queer composite church-spire peering out of the dull, commonplace mass, and saving it from being absolutely repulsive. Such was the background to the gay brocade of the women, and the silken skirts of the fops, with their absurd periwigs, as they moved about in the daily life of the teeming streets. Such a scene has Hogarth seized in his Noon—the half-French madame, daughter, perhaps, of the grizzled Huguenot captain, sailing out of the dowdy French chapel; the cook-shop, the comely epok, and her too demonstrative admirer; the negro, and the urohins of the period. And such Hogarthian scenes may still be witnessed in Soho; in some quiet back street a workshop on one hand, where the idle apprentice, his chisel laid aside, is leering up at some damsels over the way, who loll out of the windows, and exchange playful badinage with the loitering cab-driver. Gin Lane, too, and Beer Street are still in existence; the actors are all changed, but the scenery still remains, and the human comedy goes on without much alteration.

Hogarth must have come to Soho when he was courting his future wife, for Sir James Thornhill, her father—Court painter to Queen Anne and George the First, the embellisher of Hampton Court, and a very superior and awful person to the young engraver—lived in Compton Street, in a house now occupied as a tin-plate warehouse. Indeed, Soho, generally, was quite an artists' quarter. Sir Thomas Lawrence lived just out of Soho Square,

and Flaxman's well-known house still stands in Wardour Street.

But to return to the refugees who found a home in Soho. There were not many of the older emigrants left when the first signs of a newer colony appeared. The pioneer of kings out of business was Theodore, the pinchbeck King of Corsica, who was about town when Johnson and Boswell were to be met with at the Literary Club, which had its quarters, too, in Soho. And here he lies in the churchyard of St. Anne's—that church with the queer spire that Wren is said to have designed after a Danish model, in compliment to that poor creature, the husband of the Princess Anne, the “*est il possible!*” of the memoirs of the period. But the worst of Wren's works are never without a kind of grace and fitness, which is quite wanting in the Soho spire.

No long time elapsed from the days of Boswell and Johnson before the town was the witness of another and more portentous invasion. The Revolution was at its height, and from France, in haste and fear, came its terrorised noblesse—Duchesses, Marquises, Abbés, and a crowd of Counts and Barons, glad of the dingy shelter of Soho. After these, again, came a tribe of Bretons and Vendéans, the conspirators and plotters of the period, who wandered about the gloomy by-streets imagining invasions or contriving the kidnapping of the monster Bonaparte. With these a few stragglers of the high, austere republican model, who detested the Empire as the negation of all they held sacred, but who glowed with pride over the news of Austerlitz or Marengo, and wept unavailing tears over the later misfortunes of France.

As for the rest of these guests of Soho, the after-swarm, whom the lesser Napoleon drove from their homes, surely they are familiar to the present generation with all their ways and haunts. For them sprang up the cheap foreign restaurant, the little cafés, and obscure billiard-rooms that were known to the initiated about this quarter. More obscure were the exiles of the Commune, chiefly craftsmen and artisans, many of whom found employment in the workshops of Soho.

Now they are all gone, or, if any remain, it is because they prefer the country of their adoption, where they are making a better living than they could in their native land. And as the foreign colony has dwindled, the aspect of Soho has somewhat changed. “We began life,” some of its streets seem to say, “in a

solid, respectable manner. We got a little tired of respectability, and sank into loose Bohemian habits, but we have pulled ourselves together, have reformed, and gone into business, and are making money at it.”

And thus to-day Soho Square suggests chiefly pickles and jams, although there is still in the corner the familiar entrance to the Soho Bazaar, which was originally started for the benefit of the wounded soldiers and sailors in the great wars with Napoleon. Just opposite was Carlisle House, famous for the assemblies and masquerades of Madame Cornelys, where all the beauties and wits and notables of the day were collected.

Soho Square is brisk and business-like in the daytime; its ruinous old fountains have disappeared, and its green enclosure is kept neat and tidy, but it must be rather gloomy at night, when its houses of business are shut up, and there is only a lighted window here and there belonging to some hospital or refuge. Then we may fancy that ghosts of the old world reappear on the scene—the carriages, with their running footmen, the flambeaux, the chairs with their bearers, the smoky links, the championing horses, the shouting crowds. As the carriages dash up, there is fighting and quarrelling among coachmen and bearers; the coachmen lay on with their whips, the chairmen brandish their staves; oaths and screams resound; the powdered footmen can hardly clear a passage for the dainty ladies and be-frilled maccaronis of the company. The crowd that sways to and fro, and shouts coarse comments on each new arrival, has something threatening about it. The carriages have all been stopped, and “Wilkes and liberty” have been chalked in large letters on their panels.

Great were the masquerades at Carlisle House, with all the charming dames of the period in appropriate characters—the Duchess of Bolton, enchanting as Diana, though she would have been still more enchanting as Polly Peachum; Lady Waldegrave, Horace Walpole's vivacious niece; the Duchess of Hamilton in her family jewels. And the masculine characters: Adam, with an appropriate leafy mantle; a Druid, by Sir Watkin Wynn (there is always a Sir Watkin—as King of Wales he never dies); and Midas, in the person of Mr. James the painter. No wonder that the world was dying to be on Mrs. Cornelys's list.

They chide the lingering hours that move so slow,  
Till the night comes, when they again can go,  
And mingle in the enchantments of Soho.



But all this gaiety came to an untimely end. The spell of Mrs. Cornelys's enchantment was rudely broken by Sir James Fielding, the Bow Street magistrate, at the instance of the jealous managers of the Opera House. Then the Pantheon opened its doors with a rival entertainment—the Pantheon, all whose deities have forsaken it except the rosy god of wine—and soon poor Mrs. Cornelys's gay friends deserted her. Carlisle House and its contents were brought to the hammer, and Mrs. Cornelys was left to sell asses' milk in Chelsea, and at last to die in the Fleet Prison.

There is just a trace left of Madame Cornelys's gay mansion. Its saloon was turned into a Catholic chapel, which has long been a centre of activity among the poor Irish in the neighbouring courts and alleys. For Soho shades off insensibly into Seven Dials.

But before we reach Seven Dials we are fairly on the track of the destroyers. Here are hoardings, and here is a great vague space of half-demolished buildings, broken walls standing up here and there, and chimneys that will never more carry the smoke of the domestic hearth. The old street, half of which has been lopped away, has a curious blinking, half-awakened aspect—like an owl whose ivied tree has been cut down—full daylight streaming in where once was convenient gloom and obscurity. Many of the inhabitants are packing up their goods and chattels—the bundles of old rags and old rubbish out of which by some mysterious alchemy they have hitherto contrived to make a living. Here are rag-and-bone shops; catsmeat dealers; an animal-stuffer, with weird rabbits and white rats with glass eyes peering through the dusty windows, and a human skull grinning upon the scene; and with these a host of small brokers and dealers, to whom the clear sky and fresh air seem undesirable innovations.

On the hoardings we read staring placards announcing sale by auction, third or fourth of the series; this time the materials of a hundred houses—so many rickbats and so much lime-rubbish. And wherever we wander now in Soho we come across patches of hoardings and demolished houses. Wardour Street as yet is untouched; the great mart of brick-brac is uninvaded; but that curious foreign-looking passage with steps up to it, which gave the feeling of entering into

the mysterious maze of another world, busy in some unaccountable way, and swarming with life—all this is to be swept away.

Another corner was going the other day—that by Tichborne Street and Piccadilly, where cabs and carts were wont to charge so fiercely down upon the foot-passengers, and where a music-hall opened its portals. Some of the shops were still open and selling off to the last moment, while against the skyline could be seen groups of men with crowbars and picks, working away at the roof. There had been a sort of gazebo at the top, with iron railings round, where, in former days, people looked out on summer evenings and over the roofs to where the towers of Westminster rose dark against the sunset glow. A man makes a grasp at that railing, and shakes it contemptuously from its fastenings, then bang goes a pickaxe among the slates, and bricks come rattling down among the hoardings, and crash into the roof of the music-hall. But that, too, is now deserted; its last song has been sung. And so the work goes on, and when we come again the once familiar corner is a thing of the past.

A still wider clearing is close by, where the scaffolds for new buildings are already fixed. But, for the time, a quite new vista is opened out; the mansard roofs of great buildings in Piccadilly rising in the background, and one side of Great Windmill Street showing across the broken space. There, through the coats of plaster, you can dimly read the ancient inscription, "Argyll Rooms," while the cut-glass lamps over the door sparkle feebly in the garish light of day. Close by is a church, and beyond is the whirl of the streets. Here, too, have been revels and masques; here the lights have shone at nights, and horses, and carriages, and cabs innumerable have whirled among a more or less questionable crowd. Here came Comus with his midnight crew, with much laughter and song and clinking of wine-cups. But the cock-crows and the rabble rout have disappeared—all vanished into space with the other enchantments of Soho.

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# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

## CHARLES DICKENS

No. 864. NEW SERIES. SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 1885. PRICE TWOPENCE.

### ONLY A BUSINESS MAN.

By MAY DRYDEN.

#### CHAPTER XIII.

THE time had arrived when Gordon and Clarence Fenchurch had determined to give their opening-party to their mill-hands. Staniland and Mark, with their wives, came over for it, bringing with them such of their children as were old enough. But the younger brother had all the arrangement of the affair on his hands, and had enough to do, especially as Clarence had her hands full of work in preparing for the houseful of guests she would have to entertain on the occasion. They were both looking forward to the day very much, Gordon especially being delighted at the idea of having his little nephews and nieces with him for a time. Oddly enough, this melancholy, thoughtful young man: who seemed to older people morbidly self-conscious or stupidly absorbed in his business, as one side or the other of his character showed itself: was an immense favourite with little children, for one and all of whom he had an intense fondness, no doubt partly the outcome of the innate chivalry of his nature, which caused him to be always strongly drawn to whatever or whoever was weak and in need of protection. The strongest man could not, by strength of will, have altered a determination of Gordon Fenchurch's one jot; the weakest woman could move him to her way, if only that way were a straightforward one, by force of her very weakness. His little nieces were specially devoted to Uncle Gordon, and one little maid of seven years old was never happy in his presence unless permitted to climb on his knee and nestle in his arms, where she would lie contentedly for an hour at a time.

Gordon sent invitations for his party to all the Carfields, young and old, thereby causing immense excitement in the family, the younger members of which were nearly wild with delight. Phoebe and Luke were pleased, too, but Daniel was troubled by conflicting sentiments. His feelings were hurt in that he had been invited to take tea with a party of unintelligent, utterly unæsthetic workpeople, and yet it would be an opportunity of seeing Clarence Fenchurch again, and that he was extremely desirous to do. He was fully persuaded in his own mind that she was as much struck with him as he was with her, and finally he condescended to make one of the party on that eventful evening.

The hands had drawn up a programme for the first part of the evening, and that being completed, they played games and walked about, conversing with each other and with their hosts, who mingled with them on terms of apparent equality most distasteful to Daniel. He held himself aloof and leant against the wall in a retired corner, looking so gloomy that Clarence could not help feeling sorry for him. Resting from her labours for a moment, she paused at his side while she asked him if he were unwell or overtired.

"Unwell?" replied he pitifully; "no, not yet, but I shall be. Who could breathe this atmosphere and mingle with these people without being the worse for it?"

"Why," said Clarence, looking at him with somewhat contemptuous astonishment, "I can, of course. What treason are you talking? Do you not know that we regard these people as our friends? They, as well as you, are our guests to-night."

"I beg your pardon," said he half apologetically. "I did not know you were in earnest about it."

"About what?"

"Oh, well, you know, it is rather the fashion nowadays for young ladies to take up philanthropy, and I am sure I cannot imagine anyone's going in for this sort of thing, excepting just for a change. Now, I cannot pretend to find any amusement with people who are so coarse that really their only merit is that they afford material for charitable folks to work upon. Really, you know, Miss Carfield, to use a vulgar expression, you cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, try as hard as you will."

"I am thoroughly convinced of that fact," answered Clarence very quietly. "I am thoroughly convinced of that fact. Permit me also to assure you, Mr. Daniel Carfield, that I am always in earnest."

So saying, she walked away, her self-command well-nigh destroyed by Daniel's almost inconceivable self-conceit. It was too hard to be told that she had taken philanthropy up as an amusement, just for a change, when, after her devotion to Gordon, she regarded it as the greatest aim of her life to impart of her knowledge to her less gifted friends, for such, in truth, was the light in which she regarded the mill-girls. Besides which, she was disappointed and vexed at finding one of the Carfields so commonplace and stupid. She had made up her mind that they were all nice, and good, and clever, and she did not like altering her opinion—she never did like it, and had not done so often enough to get used to the process.

She frowned as she left Daniel, and, feeling disinclined to enter into conversation with anyone just then, she stopped at her brother's side to listen to a three-cornered argument that was going on between him, Luke Carfield, and old Mrs. Watkins.

Mrs. Watkins was the mother of the girls whom Gordon had described on one occasion as fat and red. She had accepted the invitation of the Brothers Fenchurch, under the impression that it would be a gathering such as she had often assisted at in her young days, where the benevolent employer gave his workpeople a tea, looked in for an hour or two in the evening just to receive their thanks and give them a word of good advice, and then left them to their own devices. Her husband, rampant Radical as he was in politics, did not approve of anything so practically levelling as the way in which the guests had been treated this evening, and in another part of the room was doing his best by kindly con-

descension to give what he considered a proper tone to the affair, while expressing disapproval by every movement of his self-asserting figure. Mr. Watkins was a man who might have stood for a model of self-contentment. There was something very peculiar in his appearance; meeting him, you would have looked at him, and wondered what it was in him that was so unusual. Not his great-coat, though that was always of the loudest and newest pattern; not his face, which, though red, and large, and coarse, was not bad-looking; not his voice, though it was loud, and dissonant, and very Lancashire in accent. No; he was peculiar throughout, and the very centre of his peculiarity was his hat. It would be a long time before you found it out, but there it lay. It was a hat that was straight, where other hats are curly; rough, where other hats are smooth. Moreover, it was the best-patterned hat in the world, and its owner was the wisest man who went by the nine-fifty train from Wilton to Homcester; the best judge of a picture, a house, or a bottle of wine, the most discriminating critic of music or the drama, and, above all, the keenest politician. His wife was as shocked as he was by the freedom with which their hosts mingled with their workpeople. She was saying as Clarence drew near:

"But I assure you, my dear Mr. Fenchurch, I heard your sister speak to one of these young louts just as though he were a gentleman."

"That is," said Gordon, with a humorous twinkle in his eye, "as though she were a lady. How would you have had her answer him, Mrs. Watkins? Would you have had her be rude to him?"

"Oh no—certainly not! It is always right to treat the poor with a civil condescension. But there should be a certain air of superiority, or they are apt to forget the difference in rank."

"But supposing there is no superiority?" said Luke Carfield.

"Of course there is. There must be—there ought to be!"

"I grant you that there is," said Gordon, "in a good many cases, at least; but not that there must be or ought to be."

"Oh, Mr. Fenchurch, you would not make them our equals?"

Poor Mrs. Watkins's intense horror at the idea was almost too much for Gordon, but he restrained his desire to laugh, and answered gravely:

"In what way are they not our equals?"



"Well, for one thing, they are poor and we are rich."

"So, then, if I were poor, you would not consider me your equal any longer?"

"Oh, my dear sir, you would be a gentleman under any circumstances. But I dare say some of these people might even have been beggars without a roof over their heads!"

"Very possible," said Gordon; "and, of course, highly immoral in them, though, in my opinion, they would have done worse to have remained in that condition. But I think that I remember a saying in a certain wise old Book, 'That the Son of Man had not where to lay His head,' and I never heard that anyone despised Him for it."

"Of course, that was not His fault at all, but the fault of the sinners amongst whom He laboured," said Mrs. Watkins, shocked again by the irreverence which could bring such an allusion into an everyday conversation.

"It is the fault of the sinners still," said Gordon, "that there is poverty at all, and of the rich sinners more than of the poor ones."

"But you would not do away with poor people?"

"Indeed I would. I would have no man so poor that he should need to ask anything from his fellow-man, save justice and the liberty to earn his daily bread."

"But," almost gasped Mrs. Watkins, "that is downright irreligious. It is fore-ordained that there must be poor people. You know the Bible says, 'The poor ye have always with you.' Besides, what is to become of the grace of charity if the poor are done away with?"

"So," said Luke, "the poor are to be poor that the rich may have the credit of relieving them? I suppose, on the same principle, you would encourage disease that the doctors may make a living by healing it?"

"Well," said Gordon, "I am afraid you and I shall never see the poor done away with, Mrs. Watkins. I do not think you need be alarmed."

"No, indeed, I hope so. It would be too disheartening if now there were to be no poor people, just when Anastasia and I have got our æsthetic night-school established for them."

"An æsthetic night-school!" said Clarence.

"Yes. Ah, my dear Miss Fenchurch, I am a philanthropist, too, though your

brother does try to make me out so hard-hearted."

"What do you teach them, Mrs. Watkins?"

"Well, nothing yet. We are trying what the force of example will do at present. Anastasia and I put on our most artistic dresses, and go to the rooms twice a week with our art-needlework, and we have one thing that must work a reform."

"What is that?"

"A masterpiece by Whistler, my dear! My husband gave it. Oh yes! he is a philanthropist, too. In fact that picture was the reason we founded the night-school. It seemed such a shame that the masses should have no opportunity of seeing it."

"Are your rooms decorated to match?"

"Oh yes! Anastasia designed the decorations. She is so fond of the people and of art, that she said she would make it her life-aim to bring the two together. Was not that a beautiful sentiment, and beautifully expressed? Anastasia is quite a philanthropist, too. So charming in a young person."

"Do you give the people books?"

"Oh yes! Dante Rossetti, and Swinburne, and the less commonplace among Browning's works."

Leaving his sister to receive Mrs. Watkins's communications concerning her æsthetic night-school, Gordon was continuing his conversation with Luke, who said:

"It is very disheartening to see how persistently the people stand in their own way, and will not be raised to a higher level. Sometimes I doubt whether it is right to leave them the choice—whether a righteous despotism would not be better for them."

"Aye, if you could make sure of finding a righteous despot. But now our Government does exercise a somewhat despotic authority in saying to our people 'you shall be educated, whether you will or not.'"

"True, but people ought to be compelled to educate their bodies as well as their minds. It is not a pleasant reflection that in gaols only is there an almost perfect health system. Our criminals are so well cared for, that they enjoy a degree of health almost unattainable by an honest poor man."

"True, certainly," said Gordon. "But come, we have been talking long enough, and Clarence wants me to introduce your sister to Deborah Leighton. She is a very

remarkable girl, I assure you, and would be so in any walk of life."

Luke and Clarence followed him, and watched him make the introduction. Clarence drew a sigh of relief as she saw Phoebe put out her hand as naturally and simply as when she had been introduced to herself, and said to Luke:

"At any rate, your sister has not any false pride."

When Daniel got home that evening, he informed his family that he did not at all approve of such gatherings as the one he had just taken part in; that he had expressed his views to Miss Fenchurch, and that she had been evidently very much struck with them.

Poor Daniel! It was well for his conceit that he did not hear Clarence give her version of his remarks to Gordon, capping them by saying that she wondered how such a sow's-ear as himself came to be found in the same family with those silk purses, his elder brother and sister.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

ISAAC LEIGHTON was one of the fortunate hands who rented Fenchurch's new houses. He and his wife and two daughters all worked in the mill, and were among the most respectable of the people who did so.

Deborah stood at the door of her father's cottage knitting, and dreamily watching old Isaac as he busied himself in his little strip of garden, which was as beautiful as patient care and the sunshine of a lovely spring could make it. She was dressed just as she had come from her work, in a short print gown, with a white apron, and a shawl drawn over her head and pinned under her chin. She had, however, cleared away the cotton-fluff from the bright hair that peeped from beneath its tidy shelter. At first sight she would not have struck a casual observer as being anything more than an ordinary mill-hand, perhaps a little tidier than such girls usually are. On looking again, however, no one could fail to perceive that here was a woman of a type unfortunately rare in any rank of life.

Deborah's face revealed at once the tenderness and the firmness of her character and the strength and intelligence of her mind. She was very handsome, and of unusually fair complexion. Her rich auburn hair shaded a low, broad, white forehead, from beneath which her brown eyes looked with an indescribable charm of

expression. Her face would have seemed hard save for the wistful tenderness of those soft eyes, which, in truth, were scarcely in keeping with her other features. She looked like one who, having devoted her life to some great and secret sacrifice, had schooled herself into outward immobility, all excepting her eyes—windows whence the imprisoned ghost of her dead longings would peep out and plead silently for pity.

Some two or three evenings had passed away since Mr. Fenchurch's opening-party, and Deborah Leighton was thinking of it still—thinking of it with a keen pleasure in the remembrance, with a deep regret that it was a delight gone by, such as she might perhaps never enjoy again.

To her companions it had been merely a "tea-party"—a more than usually enjoyable one, perhaps, but still only just such a social gathering as they had often taken part in, and would often take part in again. Most of them would have liked it better had they been left to themselves for the greater part of the evening, as was customary on such occasions; they felt the presence of the gentlefolk in some degree a restraint on their merriment. Probably they had been meant so to feel it; the Fenchurches hoped, by degrees, to accustom their hands to a gentler, quieter mode of enjoyment than was at present prevalent with them. But Deborah's pleasure in the evening had been quite different from that of the other hands. She had, for once, enjoyed a brief taste of the life she was always longing for—the life that her whole being was thirsting for—the life intellectual. For one hour of such conversation as she had shared on Saturday evening with Gordon and Clarence Fenchurch, and Phoebe Carfield, Deborah would gladly have bartered all the tea-parties of a Sunday-school year, and have thought that hour cheaply bought.

Poor girl! Who could know how hard and stupid, how utterly wearisome, her workaday life had seemed to her since that evening? How tumultuously her heart and mind had rebelled against her monotonous, mechanical labour! How she had felt at times that she would give all that was dear to her in the world to be permitted to wrench herself free, and force her way to that higher level on which she longed to stand. Passive as she appeared, her thoughts were far from peaceful as she leant, bathed in the evening sunshine, against the doorpost. It was terrible to

be tempted in this way, by what she felt to be the noblest impulses of her soul.

"Debby, child," said a sharp but not unkindly voice behind her.

"Aye, mother," she answered quietly.

"How th' lass stands mooning theer! Does thee na' know that it's thy night to go to th' school-missis fur thy lesson, and theer thou'st stonning still."

"Aye, it's time to be going. I'll just put th' watter over for thee, mother, an' be gone in a minute."

She filled the kettle, and hung it on the hook over the fire. Then she looked round the scrupulously tidy kitchen, and did one or two other little acts of domestic service, and finally, taking some books from a table-drawer, called out to her mother, who had sauntered down the garden to her husband:

"I'm going now, mother."

"Get off wi' thee. Aw'll be boun' tha's fettled all th' odd jobs. See if thee conna bring back a bit better spirits wi' thee, my lass."

Deborah walked quickly down the lane which led from the hollow to Lorton village, stopping at Lorton Green at the school-house, a large, square, red-brick building. She went round to the schoolmistress's private door; it stood half-open, giving a pleasant view of the bright, clean kitchen, and of its owner sitting at a little table in the window, busily engaged in putting to rights the sewing and knitting over which her little scholars had blundered during the day.

She was a tall, thin woman, melancholy of expression and speech, and looking much careworn, the natural result of a life spent in struggling with the dull intellects of little children, only to see them taken from her care just as they were beginning to profit by her instruction, to lose the most part of what they had learnt in the mechanical labour of the cotton-mill, or in the even more deadening occupation of a day-labourer.

Deborah stood for a moment or two at the door, and then tapped gently. Mrs. Martin turned round quickly, and rose to welcome her visitor with an air of the greatest gratification.

"I thought you were not coming, Deborah. I am glad to see you; I was afraid you must be getting tired of your books."

"I wish I were," said Deborah wearily.

"Now, don't talk nonsense, girl! You might as well wish the beauty Heaven has

given you away from your face as the love of His wisdom away from your mind."

"I know. But I think I must give up coming to you, Mrs. Martin."

"Why, in the name of goodness! Surely you do not mind silly folks laughing!"

"Do they laugh? I did not know. No; I don't mind that at all. But," she spoke slowly, and kept her face turned away from the schoolmistress, "it makes me so discontented to go on learning. The more I know the more I want to know, and the more I hate my life. No; I must stop as I am now, or change altogether."

"Is not that just what I have always said, Deborah? You must change altogether. Why should you not? Leave your present life—leave your work in the mill. Even I can earn my living by teaching, and I have brains enough to know that you have far, far more. Girl, you might be anything you choose."

The schoolmistress spoke with fierce energy, as of a thing she had thought much of, and had very nearly at heart. Her passionate intenseness of manner was to Deborah's mood like fire to tow, and changed it from one of discontented but passive endurance to one of restless and impatient longing.

She rose and paced the room, up and down, up and down, with hurried steps, as though she would run away from herself and her desire. Then she stood still, and with a pleading look put up her hands to her friend.

"Say it again," said she. "Might I be anything I liked?"

"I believe you might. I'm no lady myself, but I know one when I see one, and you are one. One of the best sort, too—one of Nature's making. You might go away and be a governess. There's nothing to hinder that I can see but your own wilfulness. You would get on in life; you would be rich; and then when you'd raised yourself, you might come back and raise the folk here, as your heart's so set on doing."

Deborah turned away and gazed through the window into the twilight. Her cheek was pale with excitement; her heart beat tumultuously. Her imagination pictured to her the life that Mrs. Martin had urged upon her. Oh, how she could love it! What a heaven upon earth it would be to her! And Mrs. Martin was right. She might get rich, and come back and help

her companions here as she never could living amongst them.

Then, as she looked, down the brow of the hill there came a group of young men and women, laughing and jesting with a noisy merriment too boisterous to be seemly or modest.

She listened with a deepening frown; then, as one or two words caught her ear, with a blush.

"I canna do it," said she, turning away from the window with a long-drawn sigh.

"What cannot you do?"

"I cannot leave them. Just listen, Mrs. Martin. I'm all thirsty to break away and leave this weary life, and, as you say, I might come back again. I might, though I doubt it. But be that how it might, I'd not be what they want then. There's good men and women enough above us trying to pull us up; but they canna do it alone. It's from us the work must come. We must help ourselves. And how are we to do that if, when one of us gets a bit of light more than the rest, she leaves them behind, and goes up alone? I cannot but think Providence set me here to do some sort of a work, and I'm frightened to think how near I've been to leaving it."

"Deborah, don't you think Providence meant you to care for your own mind and soul? To use the powers that have been given you, and make the most of them?"

"Do not tempt me to what I long for so much. Many and many's the time I've tried to persuade mysel' that it's wrong and ungrateful not to raise mysel' all I can. And I've said to mysel', let each one mend one. Surely it's only right to try to get to heaven oneself. But then it's come over me that, if I were ever so good and ever so pure, maybe, when I died, the Lord would say to me, 'Have you brought me no soul but your own?' And if I got in, how would I feel to see my Minnie, maybe, and more of the lasses, outside? I'd not be able to rest for thinking I might have brought them too. No, no. God'll take care of the soul and the mind He's given me, and I—I must work for them."

She pointed to the noisy group disappearing in the distance. The school-mistress was silent for a little while; then she said:

"I'll say no more, Deborah. Perhaps you are right, though I can't see it as you do. But be careful. I don't think you

quite see to what a life you are condemning yourself."

"Do I not!"

She spoke with a concentrated bitterness of tone that convinced and awed her friend. Presently she rose to go.

"We've not done any work to-night; may I bring my books to-morrow?" she said.

"Aye, and as often as you will."

Just as Deborah reached her own door, a hand was laid lightly on her shoulder.

"Oh, Debby," panted a cheerful voice, "I'm 'most dead wi' runnin' after thee!"

The girl's whole face and demeanour changed as she turned and saw who it was that had accosted her. Her manner brightened and softened wonderfully as she greeted her sister, and said, half playfully and half reproachfully:

"Thou naughty lass! and where hast been so late, Minnie?"

"An' wheer hast been so late, Debby?" mimicked the new comer, who was very like her sister, though her beauty wore an added loveliness from the childlike gaiety of her manner and the light grace of her movements.

Minnie Leighton was one of the acknowledged beauties of Wilton.

"I've been down to see th' school-mistress," said Deborah gently.

"An aw've bin takin' a walk. Oh, Debby, aw wish thou'd come wi' me some toimes. It 'ud do thee a deal more good than they musty books. Aw conna think what thou sees in 'em."

"Many a thing. But I'll come wi' thee, dear, whenever thon's a mind to my company."

"To-morrow, then. But, oh, I forgot!"

"What didst forget?"

"Aw promised to go wi' th' rest to-morrow."

"Well, what's i' th' way that I cannot come too?"

"They sayn— thou'lt none be vexed, Debby, if aw tell thee?"

"Am I ever vexed wi' thee, Minnie?"

"They sayn thou'rt so grave—it stons i' th' way o' eaur fun."

"Minnie, wert thou wi' th' lot that went past school to-night?"

"Aye, to be sura. We had a gradely walk. What then?"

"I'll come wi' thee to-morrow, lass," said Deborah decidedly, "an' I'll none spoil sport, neither."

## SIMON'S BAY, CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

## IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

IF the shores of False Bay are sparsely cultivated, inhospitable, and desolate, not very much more can be said for the immediate prospect that greets you, when, after a stiff pull, the top of Red Hill has been gained. From Simon's Berg over to Slangkop on the one hand, and down to the lighthouse on Cape Point on the other, there are only two or three farms of very modest dimensions, De Villiers', pronounced in the low Dutch patois Filgee, and Malherbes, likewise converted into Mill-arms, at great distances from each other. The general impression is one of intense loneliness, to many a great charm. For miles and miles you can ride and walk, and never meet a human being. A rabbit, or a bird starting up under your feet, and winging its way with a great whirring sound, are the only signs of life in this eerie place; but the climate is so temperate, dry, and healthy, that to sit down under the bits of grey rock that crop up here and there, with a book and cigar, or, better still, a beloved companion, is rest and enjoyment. A botanist can here find many delightful surprises. Delicate heaths which we are accustomed to see reared in hot-houses at home, red, lilac, white, and yellow, with large spikes of wax-like bells, and a few red and green ixias, nestle in the greenest of the clumps, but it is in richer and damper ground, removed at some distance from the sea-breezes, that the fat, lovely Cape bulbs are to be found. Beetles and rare butterflies give a little colour and animation to the scene, but these flats are mostly dry, firm, sandy tracts, dotted with sturdy little plants of "skilpad bessies" (tortoise berries), dear to the heart of the Africander youth, the fruit of which is most refreshing to the wayfarer, and makes a delicious preserve. Few or no trees are found till the shelter of the hills down towards Slangkop Point is reached, when a little verdure creeps down the valley, timid and stunted. It was on a reef inside Slangkop, that H.M.S. Wasp was so nearly wrecked in a thick fog. A few birds reward a keen hunter after a long day's riding, but little in the shape of sport can be obtained on this arid, but pure and delightful moorland. In the neighbourhood of Malherbes farm, small springbok of a graceful, gazelle-like character, and extremely agile habits, are occasionally seen,

and the young officer from the ships in Simon's Bay who has shot one, has indeed stuck a feather in his cap. They are excellent eating, when—like Mrs. Glasse's hare—they are caught.

Turning sharp off to the left on reaching the top of Red Hill, a path leads to the summit of Simon's Berg, seventeen hundred feet high. I have also climbed it from Simon's Town, straight up the face. Worn and honeycombed into the rocky crest are vast caves and galleries, of whose comfortable shelter many a homeless wanderer at home would be thankful. There are pillars, walls, and rooms, with nearly enough space to stand upright in many of them. These are inhabited (and I am bound to say are very "amelly" habitations) by troops of large and ferocious apes, who descend in the night, pick up fruit and chickens, and commit fearful havoc among the gardens. They also hurl down great stones with curiously human malice and cunning, to the terror of passers-by; between Oatlands and Newlands, several people have had very narrow escapes. Two large tigers abode hereabouts, who made perpetual raids upon Hugo's garden, till one of them perished by strychnine, concealed in the dead body of a sheep, and the other decamped to pastures new.

Descending into Simon's Town again, another most pleasant walk is the road leading past the cemetery out to Miller's Point. An English eye will be delighted with the little shady dells you come upon unawares, decorated with the most luxuriant spikes of cream-white arum, with their graceful leaves reaching often to a height of three or four feet. These lovely sub-tropical plants are contemptuously called pig-lilies by the natives, owing to the fondness displayed by that animal for their bulbous roots. At Newlands, nothing is left but the site and foundation of the once magnificent house occupied by the super-intendent of the East India Company's service, the short, beautiful turf spoiled with stones, mortar, and rubbish. The principal part of the materials, pillars, capitals, balustrades, together with most of the roofing, was conveyed to Rondebosch at great expense in bullock-waggons, and employed in the building of Belmont, Mr. Ebden's fine house there. Passing the cheerful homestead of Oatlands, a turn in the road opens out the really charming domain of Rocklands, where human industry, principally that of the Rev. Edward Meredyth, has made of a mere sandy



waste, with occasional damp spots in it, a blooming, lovely, and productive little home, well sheltered from bleak winds by the mountains above, and by a vigorous plantation of silver-trees (*Leucadendron argenteum*) from the sea-winds. For consumptive invalids, unable to live in their own land, no more health-giving, quiet, and lovely nook than Rocklands could be found. The climate is splendid; the sun genial; the air dry; the little town, with every reasonable want supplied, but two miles distant; while on either hand, the whole broad waters of False Bay, from Hangklip to the Strand, roll on, till they break on that craving, inhospitable shore. When nearing Miller's Point, one is apt to fancy that the falling pillars, arches, and stones of a ruined town are lying prostrate on the greensward. They are, however, but the jaws, ribs, and backbones of countless whales of enormous size, captured half a century before, in the once great whaling-field of False Bay, and now lying bleached to snowy whiteness by the sun and wind of many long years. The ribs are still used for fences, and are almost of stony hardness. A tall man can stand upright under several of the jaw-bones. It is curious that whales are, in these days, as seldom seen in False Bay as in England—owing, it is thought, to the invasion of steamers in those once quiet waters. Returning from Miller's Point, the rocks by the beach may be skirted, necessitating a little stiff climbing. In the shallow parts sea-anemones of every colour are to be seen, forming with star-fish, sea-urchins, and many fleshy zoophytes, most interesting natural aquaria.

The dead sleep in the pretty cemetery on a sweet slope of the mountains overlooking the bright, heaving waters of Simon's Bay; a warm sunlight plays upon their graves the whole day long; no noisome exhalations, no dank, unwholesome shade broods over the last resting-place of so many dear to us at home. One is struck by the number of drowned men who sleep there, as if the sea craved with restless eagerness for the bodies of human beings, and then flung them up on the shore as of no further use. In one large walled-in grave, twenty poor sailors of the flagship *Maidstone* lie together, and in most cases the capsizing of boats has been the cause of death. A sad episode is recalled to mind by one tablet, "Sacred to the memory of Assistant-Paymaster Sevecke, R.N." His life was yet another unavailing sacrifice to Dr. Livingstone's over-sanguine hopes of

civilising and Christianising the natives of the Zambesi delta. When going on shore at the treacherous Kongone mouth of the river, in one of the boats of the *Lyra*, charged with Livingstone's despatches, the whaler capsized on the bar, and Mr. Sevecke, with several of the men, was drowned. Three bones attached to his clothes were afterwards recovered on the sands by a search-party from his own ship, the *Boscawen*, and carefully brought down to the Cape in the flagship. I well remember how all the town was moved, when a splendid coffin, containing the three bones, covered with a Union Jack, and followed by the Admiral, Sir Frederick Grey, countless officers and men, and the flagship's band, was landed at the dock-yard jetty. From there the long train slowly passed on foot through the yard, and the open street of the little town, and round the foot of the mountain, the band with muffled drums playing the Dead March in *Saul* over, and over, and over again, till the cemetery was reached, where a most touching service was read by the Rev. Mr. Fox, before consigning to the grave all that was left of one so loved by his messmates.

On another occasion, despatches and heavy cumbersome goods for Dr. Livingstone's expedition had to be landed at the Kongone. H.M. brigantine *Dart* was therefore ordered to take them. Knowing the dangerous bar well, Mr. McClane, in command of her, called for volunteers to accompany him. Lieutenant Woodruff, a very young officer of the Royal Marines, who belonged to the flagship, and was only taking passage to Simon's Bay in the *Dart*, and six men, gallantly responded to his call. They had crossed the deepest part of the bar, when their boat was lifted on end by the boiling surf, and rolled over and over. Not one of those eight men were ever seen again. The *Dart* lay at anchor, as close as the shallow water allowed, but more than six miles away; the sole officer now remaining in her was a young master's assistant, named Warr, quite a boy. Mounted on the cross-trees of the brigantine, he had the misery of seeing the boat capsize and of being unable to render any assistance. The loss of her commanding officer and six of the best men had nearly unmanned her; but, though so short-handed and inexperienced, the boy's courage never failed, and, after waiting four days in that most desolate place and seeing neither a sail nor a human being, he

resolved to take the ship down to the Cape alone. The Dart was extremely heavily-rigged, with enormous spars, her mainsail large enough for a full-rigged ship. She, however, arrived safely in Simon's Bay, after a most anxious passage, bringing the dreadful news. Young Warr had absolutely no help or counsel, except in steering or pulling the ropes, no one being left but ordinary seamen and boys. He had to keep all the watches and navigate the ship alone. No sooner had he reported his arrival in Simon's Bay than he fell ill with a fever, brought on by the anxieties of such a position. This plucky young fellow had been a Greenwich schoolboy, and afterwards died in China.

Not only did nearly all that unhappy expedition, including my poor friend, Mrs. Livingstone, the good Bishop Mackenzie, Mr. Burrup, and many others, perish miserably of jungle-fever, but twice as many more naval officers and men, whose mission it was to sail the seas and fight the Queen's enemies, met their deaths while merely carrying to and fro and attempting, in obedience to orders, to cross the bar and communicate with the ill-fated expedition.

Curiously enough, the only mention made of these cruel disasters in the various lives and travels of poor Dr. Livingstone is that his "letters and despatches had unfortunately been lost by the capsizing of the boats," an omission, I am sure, he would greatly have regretted.

There is one great drawback at the Cape, to what is otherwise a most delicious and healthful climate, and that is the prevalence of south-easters, continuing as they will do from October to April—the Cape summer—with extraordinary violence and pertinacity for ten days and more at a time. They become at last most wearisome, and the "Cape doctor," as it is called, blows not a little gritty white sand down your throat as you are valiantly struggling out for a walk. The Kloof wind (south-west), occasionally blowing in the Cape winter, is especially dangerous to boats sailing in the bay, owing to the violent and variable squalls which come down from the hills. It is a chilly, rainy wind, productive of cold and sore throat. From May to October (winter), north-westerly winds prevail, but are of much less violence and duration—certainly in Simon's Bay—than the summer gales. It is in Table Bay, owing to the absence of shelter, that a north-wester blows with such fatal violence.

I have seen fifteen strong ships in one morning driven from their anchors, and go on shore on the beach abreast of the Observatory, one over the other, in a vast tangled heap, with frightful loss of life. Simon's Bay is happily very safe from all dangerous winds, and the Cape cargo-boats, with their snug and serviceable rig, may be seen steadily going out in almost any weather with perfect safety. I never saw a cargo-boat capsized, though countless men-of-war's boats came to grief at different times. Those useful launches, known in the Navy as the "De Horsey rig," are adapted from the Cape cargo-boats. There are local and infallible signs of coming wind, which never fail to warn seamen. A heavy cloud-cap of white vapour, lying immovable for many days on the Muysenberg, means a south-easter; if the Hottentot Holland range of mountains is also capped, it will probably last long and be violent. If a light vapour wreath round and conceals the top of Simon's Berg, it will rain within a very short time.

In winter a fire is most comfortable, though few good houses up the country are provided with fire-places, the Dutch ladies sitting hour after hour with their feet on a pan of charcoal, a most fattening and unpleasant process. The Cape nights are lovely, more beautiful than anywhere else in the world; and with nothing to fear from malaria, exhalations, or anything unwholesome, one may sit out in the cool, dry, sweet-smelling air with impunity. The Cape moonlight is celebrated for its extraordinary brilliance; books with small print may be read without an effort by its light, while for love-making the balmy, quiet Cape night is unequalled. The stars also are brighter than in other climes; the Southern Cross, lying rather on its side as it rises from behind the head of Simon's Berg, is a lovely and brilliant constellation. From the Cape Observatory the stars are more constantly to be seen than from any other.

The waters of False Bay teem with fish. On the first beach there is excellent seine-fishing, consisting of red roman, snoek occasionally, and a sort of red mullet, no more like the red mullet of Portland than a bit of blanket. Snoek is found in great quantities about ten miles off shore, and forms the staple food of the Malays. It is a long Barracouta-like fish, with a smooth, snaky skin, and no scales. Salted and dried it is excellent, but has always the reputation of being a very foul feeder. A

poisonous fish, called toad fish, a bright-coloured, snub-nosed little wretch, crowds round your line as soon as it is down, to the exclusion of all decent fish, with extraordinary pertinacity and desire to be caught. As soon as it is hooked, it blows itself out like a drum, and emits a poisonous fluid; it is certain death to eat of it. Crayfish are excellent, of great size and extremely plentiful, but fish generally about here are coarse and woolly.

The inhabitants of Simon's Bay are of various races and colours—English, Dutch, Malay, Africander, Kaffir, natives of the Mozambique of slave origin, and Kroomen, and a few of the original Hottentots, with an occasional Venus, are still to be seen, though they are fast disappearing. The Kroomen born at Cape Coast, Cape Three Points, and other places in the Bight of Benin, have passed most of their lives in our men-of-war on the West Coast. They bear most curious names, adopted by them, or bestowed upon them in honour of any great personage that may happen to be much talked about at the time of their entrance into the navy—thus, Billy Pitt, Duke of Wellington, King William, Prince Albert, Lord Nelson, were all Kroomen, or boys as they are called, even when grey-headed old men, remarkably like our original type—according to Darwin. They are excellent cooks and labourers, as well as sailors, a merry-hearted, childlike race who never seem to grow old and staid. Hour after hour you will hear them in the dockyard hauling up boats and timber with unfailing spirits and good-humour, chanting the while a most absurd tissue of rubbish, mostly improvised very cleverly from any passing object or person. The burthen of their chant is of this description: "Yard, oh! Yard, oh! Monkey in de yard, oh! Oh—h!" followed by a curious chuckle of amusement at their feeble little jokes.

A great part of the Cape population consists of Malays, who are a very remarkable people, and believed by some learned in biblical lore to be the lost tribe of Israel. They most certainly preserve some Jewish customs and traditions. Malays hold all the building trade in their hands, and are excellent masons. They are also great in freemasonry. Much of the fruit trade, and all the washing, is done by the Malays, who are a very great power at the Cape, though never rising above the small tradesman class, however rich they may be. Neither males nor females engage in domestic service as a rule, though they

are sometimes found as cooks, but trade, lend, barter, and industriously lay pound to pound, much as the Jews do, owning great numbers of horses, waggons, and houses. The Cape Malays are of a light yellow colour, with sharp, half-European, half-Asiatic features, and lank black hair. They are the descendants of some convicts transported from Java in the old Dutch times, when both places belonged to Holland. In religion they are Mahometans, and their great high priests perform the Mecca pilgrimage if possible before they die, but it is looked upon as a melancholy duty to be got through, the miseries of a pilgrimage being almost equal to those of a slaver, disease almost always breaking out owing to the filthy habits of the pilgrims. Though not very strict in the performance of their religious duties, they observe the Ramadan and other sacred seasons, and are most abstemious and sober in their habits; they also abjure pork. The dress of a Malay is clean and of expensive material, consisting of a heavy pagoda-shaped palm-leaf hat, akin to the Chinese head-gear, full white linen sleeves, baggy trousers, and long vest—a costume completed by a gaudy Madras handkerchief wound round their heads.

The women are attired in brilliantly-coloured bodies and trailing skirts, full white sleeves, wooden clogs, and have superb heads of coarse, shiny, black hair, drawn tightly back off their foreheads, twisted into a great knot low down behind, and stuck through with heavy gold-headed pins. They go out in all weather without any covering on the head, sauntering majestically along, heeding neither sun nor rain. The priests are clothed in turbans, shawls, and flowing Eastern robes, with a high pointed cap. We have long had a mission among them, but in several years only one Malay was converted, who was said to have afterwards recanted. They possess most wily tongues, and great powers of argument. The men go to mosque, the women never, not having any souls. The latter have very sharp tongues, and are a great power in the house.

Marriages are celebrated with great pomp and expense, the whole party afterwards driving out in carriages, drawn by six horses, urged to the very top of their speed; dozens of men, women, and children cram into the vehicles, all in the highest condition of hilarity. Though no converts to Christianity are made, a great number of Englishwomen join the ranks of the Malays, cheerfully accepting the no-soul theory,

espousing a well-to-do Malay, and adopting the dress with the sedate manners of the race. A few Englishmen also, who, having fallen in love with a pretty girl, have been obliged by their laws to turn Malay before being allowed to marry her. The children, who are much petted and indulged, freely attend our schools; but honesty is not altogether reputed among their race to be "the best policy."

Small-pox is a dreadful scourge among the Malays, owing to their horror of vaccination; their secret lives, and isolated condition. The existence of the disease is not known till infection has been conveyed far and near, with the most idiotic disregard of the commonest precautions. They will hold wakes and curious rites over the dead, vast numbers of men and women collecting together in the chamber of the departed to mourn and lament. Thus two or three thousand lives are every now and then sacrificed at the Cape, to their habits of superstitious concealment. The Malay burial-ground in Simon's Bay adjoins the English. One is almost amused at the childish and ridiculous little objects which are placed at the head of the flat, low graves. Glass beads, little wax dolls, bits of coloured glass, shells, tinsel, artificial flowers, trinkets of brass and mock stones, bottles of scent and oil, scraps of ribbon, and the veriest rubbish, adorn the last resting-places of the dead, including substantial refreshments for the journey in the case of the newly-buried.

The Malays are excellent and intrepid sailors, managing their curiously-painted sailing-boats with great dexterity. A beloved boat will be painted all the colours of the rainbow in stripes and patches, with two horrible-looking eyes on each bow. Many of the names common among them, such as Emanuel, Lazarus, suggest a Jewish descent.

Simon's Bay is a favourite resort for vessels of the navies of all nations, more especially Russians, who thus break the long voyage between the Amoor river and Cronstadt, putting in for rest and supplies, and making much acquaintance with "Cape Smoke," a spirit as ardent and intoxicating as their own raki. Their sailors have a curious custom of conveying to the top of Red Hill, as soon as possible after their arrival, some large thin sheets of iron. These are propped up, and form a species of iron-clad tent, in the midst of which they kindle a large fire. The iron well-heated, the ashes are raked out, and a Russian or

two steps in, denuded of all clothing, apparently to be baked. Having perspired freely, they rub themselves down, don their baggy garments again, and rather flatter themselves they are well washed!

The Cape is not nearly appreciated at its full value by our own Government, or by intending emigrants; the climate, temperate as it is—dry, healthy and equable—is eminently suited to an English constitution, indeed the pretty Dutch English town of Caledon has done more wonders for consumptive people in prolonging and cheering their lives for many years than all the doctors in England or Madeira. The soil is fertile, the rains genial, the people most kind and hospitable; there are no bad hurricanes, no earthquakes, not many cobras, no horrible fevers and epidemics, and it ever must be, from its position, one of England's most precious colonial possessions, to be jealously guarded from the bare possibility of capture by any other nation.

Looking back upon eight years spent in Simon's Bay—years chequered by sorrow and joy—I love the desolate hills, and the broad waters of the bay. I love even the cheerful little dockyard, and, more than all, the quiet God's-acre, so sacred to me, and would fain have been able, had it been possible, to revisit the spots where so much happiness came to me—remembered now only affectionately through the mist of years.

## WHAT WAS HER STORY?

### A PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERIENCE.

#### IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

ALL good things come to an end, and so at length did Mrs. Campion's dinner. It was never the custom at Kolokythis Lodge for the men to linger long over their wine. With the departure of the hostess disintegration set in, and the guests, as a rule, were too indifferent to their host, and too suspicious of each other, to thoroughly fraternise. To-night, Linburn made the move even earlier than usual.

On reaching the drawing-room they received a smiling welcome from the three married ladies. The governess and her pupils had retired for the night. Linburn flung himself on a sofa beside Mrs. Campion, and resting his flushed face on his hands, prepared to study her at his leisure.

Mrs. Webster sat down to the piano, and began to sing an absurd little song

about a damsel perched upon an impossibly high stile in some "north countree." Schönbein stood by her side, turning over the leaves. Mrs. Highbury Banks delivered an amusing harangue on the unwillingness of the present generation to perpetrate matrimony. No one made the least pretence of listening to the music, and Mrs. Webster did not expect it. She sang to please herself and her cavalier, and left off or began again as it suited her.

To Linburn the remainder of the evening passed rapidly. It seemed to him that conversation with Mrs. Campion was only just beginning to attain a delightful point of personal interest when someone, going to a window, drew back the curtains, and discovered a white world. During dinner the snow had been falling, and now roof, and path, and road were covered in a thin white mantle. A light wind had cleared away the clouds, the sky was bright with stars, while the moon rising between the frosted branches of an elm-tree opposite shone in on the disordered room, and mixed her silver light with the garishness of lamp and candle.

The guests all came over to the window and expressed their admiration or surprise. As they stood there the slow notes of a distant bell rang out twelve.

"The wind must be in the east," said Campion; "that's Big Ben."

Then there was a talk of departure, and Mrs. Highbury Banks was the first to go, taking Schönbein with her in her brougham. She much regretted she had not a third place to offer Kerr, for although he had done absolutely nothing to ingratiate himself with her, she, too, was smitten with his "masculine beauty."

Kerr said good-night, and Linburn, after an interval, followed him contentedly enough down into the hall. That interval had comprised a tender passage with Mrs. Campion in the conservatory, where they had lingered a moment to admire the view. He had only pressed her hand, and she but touched with pointed fingers the gardenia in his coat; still, this had given him an "emotion," and he was perfectly satisfied.

Linburn was as much the prey of "emotions" as are some other men of gout or of dyspepsia. The blottiest Japanese fan would send a rush of sentiment across his soul, which obliged him to sit down—at least, so he said.

In the hall he found Campion and Webster, assisting a servant to assist Kerr on with his coat.

"How are you going?" said the host. "I don't think you'll find a cab up this way, but you are sure to in the High Street, if you don't mind walking through the lane. I can let you out at the back, you know."

They followed him into the dining-room, and he, unbolting the window-shutters, preceded them down a flight of stone steps into a narrow garden. He unlocked a little door, and they all stepped into the lane together.

Here it was not unpleasant walking, for the ground was dry and hard. The wind, which had blown away the threatened snow-storm, had also blown the fallen snow from the path, and swept it in loose drifts against the palings.

"Well, good-night," said Campion, addressing himself to Kerr, and ignoring Linburn as much as possible. "Straight along, you know. You can't mistake it, and I advise you to walk fast, for it's deuced cold."

"I wish I saw some chance of getting home," complained Webster in thick, rich tones which suggested that he might, perhaps, find some physical difficulty in the feat; "but my wife has retired to talk confidences with Mrs. Campion in her bedroom, and the Lord only knows when they'll finish. Don't let Mrs. Banks persuade you into matrimony. You are a thousand times better off as you are."

Then they said "Good-night" again, and the last thing the young men heard was Campion's voice proposing a drink of something hot, and Webster's cheery acquiescence.

For some moments Linburn walked along, immersed in his own pleasant thoughts. He did not feel cold, but, on the contrary, lifted his hat to let the wind blow in upon his long hair. He laughed softly, as he repeated to himself some of his speeches to Mrs. Campion which he thought particularly good. Then it suddenly struck him that Kerr was very silent, and then he remembered that he had been so all the evening. The annoyance Linburn had felt during dinner returned, and he spoke with some vexation:

"I do think, Julius, that for my sake you might have paid Mrs. Campion a little more attention, although you yourself might have found a study of her profitable. Her character is very complex"—here he sighed—"and I counted on your assistance in unravelling it. But I flatter myself I have this evening obtained the clue."

He fingered his moustache pensively, and was lost in retrospection, until Kerr's conduct again occurred to him, and he said sharply:

"What is the matter with you? I can't make you out to-night. Mrs. Webster must have a nice opinion of you. I think you neglected her, and you have hurt my feelings. You seem to imply that my friends are not worth being pleasant to!"

Kerr's answer was unexpected.

"What do you know of the woman who sat next to you at dinner?" he said.

"Mdlle. Lecœur, the governess, do you mean?" Linburn asked in genuine surprise.

"Yes. Who is she? What is her story?"

"Her story?" repeated Linburn. "Why, what should her story be? She has always been a governess, I imagine, and there is nothing very romantic in that."

Kerr laughed oddly.

"Do you know, Linburn, that you are one of the most conventional men in London? It is in vain that you wear your hair long and your collars low. All your rhapsodies about Japanese tea-kettles, emotions, and soul-waves have not opened your eyes to anything outside your own narrow groove. Because this woman is a governess, you have never thought it worth your while to look at her, and yet she carries a tragedy within her breast which could have extinguished with its gloom all the lights and all the laughter we have left behind."

Linburn stood still with amazement. There was something so sombre about Kerr's manner that it arrested the flow of complacent warmth circling round his heart, and he began to be sensible of the cold.

"You complain that I was silent and pre-occupied," said Kerr; "I had good reason to be so. I was following that woman's history as she herself was following it, from the dark beginnings down to the unknown darker end. I could tell you some curious mental experiences I have had this evening, only to-morrow I shall probably regret not having held my tongue."

"You are coming out in a new light," said Linburn jestingly, "and developing a vein of romance, up to now only too effectually concealed. Is it due to Campion's wine? or Campion's wife? For it is more reasonable to suppose that she should have influenced you in spite of yourself, than that you should have drawn sources of

inspiration from a pale, thin lady of forty."

"And, as usual, you are arguing from false premises," replied Kerr. "The particular way in which a person or thing affects you, is no criterion for the manner in which it may affect the rest of the world. I drank very little wine, and the only conscious sentiment which Mrs. Campion aroused in me was a desire to see somebody dust the powder off her face, on which it lay an inch thick."

Kerr was silent for some seconds before he spoke again.

"Mdlle. Lecœur, on the contrary," he continued, "awakened in my mind a curious train of thought, which I am tempted to share with you, less for your own gratification, than in the hopes of shaking off the disagreeable sensation which oppresses me."

Linburn began to feel uncomfortable. While delighting in fictitious sentiment, real tragedy of any sort was abhorrent to his pleasure-loving nature. He shivered and drew his furred and wadded cloak closer round him. The cold was very great. Through the loose and broken palings on the right were seen glimpses of a desolate park, whose moonlit lawns were interspersed by groups of ancient trees. Heaven and earth were filled with a white light from moon, stars, and snow. Only Kerr's voice, and the sound of their feet grinding down the gravel disturbed the silence of the hour.

"My first impression," said Kerr, "on entering the drawing-room this evening, was of too much light, too much colour, too much noise. The little golden lady to whom Mrs. Campion introduced me was all glitter, from the diamonds in her ears to the diamonds on her shoes. Her mind seemed to have caught the infection. Every word she said was with a view to dazzle. I had not talked with her five minutes before I was bored to death. My eyes involuntarily seeking some point of repose, fell on a lady standing at a table a little apart from anyone else. The pensive quiet of her attitude, the uniform darkness of her gown, were attractive after the sharp colours and noisy gaiety of the rest of the company."

"The first few seconds I looked at her were enjoyable. Her face was turned from me, but I could see that the lines of cheek and throat had once been charming. There was something in her figure, in the droop of her heavily-braided head, in the languor of

her long, lithe arms and hands, that fascinated me; but presently the feeling of pleasurable repose she had awakened in me was replaced by an odd sense of uneasiness. I tried to analyse the reason. I could not determine whether I had seen her before, or whether she merely recalled to me some other person or some picture.

"Mrs. Webster, no doubt, wondered at my preoccupation and began to form that unfavourable opinion of me which I afterwards did so much to confirm. I could not keep my eyes long from the woman by the table. Her limbs were so motionless; her attitude so dreamy, that the odd fancy struck me the soul had escaped, and was wandering, perhaps, thousands of miles away, while the body patiently waited its return. This notion was dispelled by the movement of her hands, mechanically half-opening and closing a black fan which she held. Did you ever notice her hands, Linburn? They are long and white, and well-cared-for, but to me they are repulsive-looking. They are compressed and very narrow, as though they had never been exercised in honest work, or extended to help a fellow-creature. A hand is often a better index of character than a face. In the lines of that woman's hand is neither candour nor generosity. She would take much and give nothing. But the fingers and nails are still more typical; though the former are slender, the points are no thinner than the roots, and the finger-tip, instead of turning slightly upwards, as we see in examples by Canova, has a contrary inclination; while the nail, which is large and flat, is depressed at the extremity downward and inward. Her history is written on her hand. A trifling scratch on that satin-smooth skin would have excited once the deepest pity in the owner, but those pallid fingers would steep themselves in blood, if there were no other way to preserve the ease and security which her soul loves."

Kerr's voice was sending a sincerer thrill of emotion along Linburn's spinal chord than ever a Japanese vase had done. The power of the wine, the excitement of the conversation, were clearing off his mind. The memory of Mrs. Campion, with her coaxing voice and encouraging smiles, began to fade away, with all the other memories of the evening, into a misty background, against which he vainly endeavoured to paint the figure of Miss Lecœur, whom he had seen so often, and so indifferently.

"I don't understand," he said in a troubled voice; "I have never noticed her in the way you mean. I seem unable even to recall her face."

"Let me aid you," said Kerr. "Judging from her figure alone, she might be a woman in her twenties; but in her haggard face, among the wrecks of lost beauty, is the experience of—who shall say how many years? Do you not see her narrow forehead, with its heavy crown of hair? Her dark and fugitive eyes with the violet stains beneath, caused by unceasing tears? The lips that have once been lovely, but now are wasted and colourless through pain?"

"As I passed her on my way to dinner I accidentally brushed her dress, and my touch brought her back from the dark land in which she was wandering. She started, and her fan fell to the ground. When I returned it to her, and she murmured a word of thanks, her eyes met mine, then looked away; but in that second's glance, I saw such hopeless misery as to give me the feeling of blood-curdling which people tell of. I looked at Mrs. Webster, curious to know if she, too, had experienced a like sensation, but her silly little face was as brilliant as ever, and all her mind was given to the proper adjustment of her golden train.

"Who was that lady in black?" I asked her as we entered the dining-room, and she answered, as you did, carelessly: 'Oh, that was only the governess!' She, too, had never thought it worth while to study the expression or the character of a person in that position. However, she told me one or two things about Mdlle. Lecœur—that she is very silent, that she is quite engrossed with her duties, that she prefers not being noticed. This is a convenient theory, greatly favoured by ladies concerning their inferiors.

"But if that woman is silent, it is because she dare not speak of that which lies nearest to her heart. If she is pre-occupied, it is not with her pupils. Her pupils mean to her nothing more than food and lodging. If she is unaccustomed to the society she meets here, it is because she has moved at one time among men to whom her will was law, and once, at least, passionate love-vows have been breathed into her ear. She lives in the world of her past, but her lips are sealed concerning it; only in the awful land of dreams she moves through it again. I can imagine the morning agony of her face,



when she rises to begin another day. For if the nights are torture, the days are worse in their monotonous quiet, when she must sit for hours with her dark eyes decorously bent over her book, while her heart is on fire! She would give worlds to begin again, to play her cards differently; to start once more with her lost youth, her bought experience. She would not be better—she would be wiser.

"Perhaps it was on some such night as this, when the sky was full of stars, and the earth was wrapped in snow—snow, not as we see it here, but lying many feet deep, in a northern land, that she took the first step towards her doom. And now she cannot see the snow without recalling every incident of that night and its fatal consequences, for it drew her on to the necessity of a crime, the memory of which gives her no rest. I read in her eyes the despair that prompted it, in her curious hands the violence that carried it out, in her pallid mouth the burden of silence which has oppressed her ever since. Her heart has become a chamber of horrors, from which there remains but one door of doubtful escape."

Linburn was completely sobered and considerably astonished. There was something eerie in the way Kerr talked, whose usual cold common-sense gave additional colour to the strangeness of this outbreak.

"What unutterable ideas you have!" said Linburn with a nervous shudder; "but you are sadly wanting in chivalry to the lady. You have only met her once, yet are ready to swear away her character because she has a melancholy expression and ugly hands."

The young men had now reached a point where the lane suddenly increased to twice its previous width. The boundary-wall turned at right angles with itself, and after running a couple of yards turned again, and was replaced by an open iron railing, behind which the park stretched away in what seemed illimitable snowy vistas. Kerr stood still, and leaning against the railings, looked into the misty distance.

"You will acquit me of any very vivid belief in the supernatural?" he asked.

Linburn smiled a sad but reassuring smile.

"You believe in nothing that is incapable of demonstration in the lecture-room," he answered.

"Well, then, don't laugh when I tell you that to-night I saw into that woman's mind—at least, that is the only way I can

account for the phenomenon I am going to describe. By her side at dinner there stood a child. I knew then that the snow had fallen, for half-melted snow-flakes were trickling down its head and neck. I never could see its face, which was constantly turned towards hers, but with its little ill-shaped withered fingers it stroked her hand, or drew towards her her knife. If you had observed her at all you would have seen that the whole of dinner she played with her table-knife; sometimes balancing it idly between her fingers, sometimes feeling stealthily along its blade; but I saw it was the child who guided her hand, and when she would have put it out of reach, the child drew it back again. You remember once passing her a knife of your own? You were unconsciously mesmerised by her thoughts, but to me it seemed that the child was stretching an arm across your plate, and so close to you that I could swear its sleeve had touched you. Once, her fan or her napkin slipping, she bent sideways to restore it, and the creature instantly transferred its hand from her wrist to her throat, drawing its fingers across the skin with a slow caressing movement. If anyone spoke to her, and thus disturbed the current of her ideas, she became free, the child was no longer there; directly she sank back into abstraction, it stood again by her side, stroking her wrist, and looking up into her face. When the ladies left the dining-room it went too, holding on to a fold of her gown.

"A queer hallucination, was it not?" said Kerr, after a pause, during which, for once in his life, Linburn found absolutely nothing to say. "You will understand my reluctance to speak of it. To-morrow by daylight I shall inevitably appear to myself either a madman or a fool. And yet, after all, it may be merely a case of pronounced thought-reading; the fixed idea which she dwells on so persistently, that it has become for her a visible presence, may through sympathy, or magnetism, or whatever you like to call it, have become visible to me also. At least I have told you faithfully what I imagined I saw, and you can judge for yourself of my state of sanity. I was so engrossed in reconstructing her miserable story that I admit I lost sight of my duties as a guest."

Linburn was listening with strained attention; mingled with Kerr's last phrases he had caught the sound of footsteps hurrying towards them. Round the angle of the wall appeared a man, hairless and breathless. It was Mr. Webster, and was

it the moonlight which made his rubicund face appear so distorted and pale!

"I thought I should overtake you," he said, addressing himself to Kerr in odd fluttered tones, the very ghost of his former hearty voice. "Someone remembered you were a doctor. They have sent elsewhere, too, but I thought I might overtake you first. An awful thing has happened up at Campion's Mdle. Lecœur—poor unhappy woman——"

There was no need for him to make that ghastly sign with his hand. Looking into each other's eyes the two men knew what had occurred without speaking. The story of her life had gone down with her to the grave.

### MUSIC AND MUSICIANS.

NOT very many years ago, within the recollection, indeed, of middle-aged men, the taste for music in England, although gradually increasing, was still comparatively in its infancy, and, as far as the masses were concerned, to all intents and purposes a dead letter. There was certainly a traditional reverence, warming into a temporary enthusiasm on the recurrence of triennial festivals, for Handel, and a growing respect, fostered by the precept and example of Charles Hallé, for the genius of Beethoven; but the votaries of these masters were mainly limited to the frequenters of the Philharmonic and Exeter Hall; the public in general knew little about either, and cared less. We had two opera-houses, more or less well attended according to the success or failure of the last imported vocalist, but regarded rather as a necessary accompaniment to the London season than from any purely artistic point of view; the chief object of the subscribers being to show themselves in their stalls or boxes on certain nights of the week, with the placid consciousness of having done the correct thing. Those were the days when barrel-organs revelled in *Ah che la Morte* and the Bohemian Girl; when the ballads of Claribel were on every piano, and Wagner was the "bête noire" of classical irreconcilables; when the slightest departure from established rules was looked upon as an unpardonable heresy, and the daring innovations of Liszt and Berlioz were contemptuously stigmatised as cacophany.

Who would then have believed or even admitted the possibility of a change such

as a few short years have brought with them, or in his wildest flight of imagination have anticipated so complete a realisation of the Jerroldian motto: "Time works wonders!" Had we then been told that the simple announcement of a symphony by some new light of the modern school, or the reappearance of some popular instrumentalist, would one day suffice to fill the Crystal Palace Concert Room or St. James's Hall to overflowing, should we not have shrugged our shoulders in polite incredulity, and inwardly laughed our informant to scorn? And yet such things are; we may marvel at the transformation, but it is nevertheless an accomplished fact, "which," as the song says, "nobody can deny." Within the last decade music has become not merely an attraction but a necessity; it is no longer exceptionally cultivated by the few, but has little by little enlisted and retained the sympathies of the many; nor, as far as can be judged by appearances, is its influence likely to decrease. There are, of course, and always will be, differences of opinion as to the merits or demerits of any particular school; and much yet remains to be done before we can fairly lay claim to the faculty of recognising talent wherever it is to be found; but that there is a decided improvement in this respect it is impossible to deny. Unless, indeed, people frequent musical gatherings simply because it is the fashion to do so, and voluntarily undergo the infliction of listening to a performance they neither understand nor appreciate, which is scarcely credible, we may safely conclude that the closely-packed audiences periodically congregated together have nothing in common with Panurge's sheep, but—whether the inducement be a symphony, a sonata, or a ballad "*olla podrida*"—consult their own taste, and "go in" for Raff, Brahms, or Mr. Molloy as the fancy prompts them. Music, therefore, being clearly an established institution among us, it is possible that the following anecdotal reminiscences of some of its chief interpreters, selected from authentic and by no means generally known sources, may not be considered uninteresting.

On one of the last appearances of Beethoven in public, he was announced to play a new work of his composition for piano and orchestra. It having been reported, and truly as it turned out, that, owing to his increasing deafness he would seldom be again heard in a concert-room, the attendance was naturally large, and the

reception of the composer, when he took his place at the instrument, was most enthusiastic. By some unaccountable freak of imagination, however, he fancied himself officiating as conductor, and on coming to a "fortissimo" passage suddenly crossed his arms, and let them go right and left with such force as to send the candles on each side of the piano flying about the room. Irritated by this interruption, but happily unconscious of the merriment he had excited, he recommenced playing; two boys, candle in hand, having meanwhile by way of precaution been stationed beside the instrument. On the recurrence of the passage in question he performed the same manoeuvre as before, and although one of the candle-bearers prudently kept himself out of harm's way, the other, less fortunate, was literally knocked head over heels. This time the mirth of the audience knew no bounds, and Beethoven, in a transport of fury, after venting his rage on the piano by entirely demolishing half-a-dozen notes, rose abruptly from his chair, and without taking the slightest notice of anyone present, strode indignantly out of the room, leaving his astounded fellow-musicians to propitiate the public as best they might.

From 1829 to 1860, with few exceptions, Meyerbeer passed the summer months every year at Spa. An eye-witness thus describes him: "He was invariably dressed in an ill-fitting black frock-coat, with a black silk neckcloth wound several times round his throat, high and stiff shirt-collars, and tight trousers with straps. His gloves were many sizes too large for him, and he wore a tall silk hat falling not over gracefully on the nape of his neck. He always carried a huge cotton umbrella under his left arm when he didn't use it as a walking-stick. When on foot, he shambled along with a tottering step as if he were blind; but his usual mode of locomotion was an insecure seat on a donkey, his legs dangling almost on the ground, in which guise he might regularly be seen of an afternoon in the Allée du Marteau."

Jules Janin used to relate with great glee that during his stay at Spa, on returning from an excursion in the neighbourhood, he asked his servant if anyone had called. "Nobody worth speaking of," was the contemptuous answer; "only the queer old fellow on a donkey with a large umbrella!" Among the composer's peculiarities was a horror of cats, the mere sight of one throwing him into a nervous fit. He was, as a rule, silent in company, and

disliked being brought in contact with inquisitive people. One of these, meeting him while he was enjoying a solitary "constitutional" in the Champs Elysées, fastened on him like a leech; and, anxious to have the latest intelligence from the fountain head as to the progress of the long-expected *Africaine*, asked him point-blank if it were nearly ready. "Mon-sieur," coolly replied Meyerbeer, "the Champs Elysées are open to everyone, but my secrets are not like the Champs Elysées;" and turned on his heel, leaving the indiscreet questioner no wiser than he was before.

As a memorial of his frequent visits to Spa, a charmingly picturesque promenade artistically laid out near the spring of the Geronstère by order of the municipality, records the titles of the composer's principal works. A tiny waterfall like a silver thread is called "La Cascade de Ploërmel;" a flight of steps composed of roughly-hewn stones represents "L'Escalier du Prophète;" a wooden bridge is dignified by the name of "Le Pont de Marcel;" and two recesses, where benches are placed for the accommodation of visitors, are respectively denominated "Le Repos de Pierre et Catherine" and "Le Repos de Raoul."

Meyerbeer's fidus Achates in Paris was a little Frenchman, Gouin by name, whose duty it was to act as intermediary with managers and journalists, to depreciate the works of rival composers, and to be perpetually at his patron's beck and call. One evening at the Opera, perceiving that the latter was engaged in conversation with a certain Chaudé, an intimate friend of the director of the (then) Académie Royale de Musique, he modestly remained in the background until the interview was at an end. Presently Meyerbeer, turning round in search of his satellite, beckoned to him to approach.

"Gouin!" began the maestro, with a pronounced nasal twang, "the man I have just been talking to is a very intelligent fellow."

Gouin signified his assent by a bow.

"He has a high opinion of my *Prophète*."

"No wonder."

"And enquired particularly about my *Africaine*."

"Very natural."

"And yet I never saw him before. How do you call him?"

"M. Chaudé."

"Has he anything to do with the Opera?"

"A great deal."

"Ah! Who and what is he?"

After a moment's reflection, his companion replied in a confidential tone, but loud enough to be heard by those around him:

"He is the manager's Gouin."

When Adolphe Adam came to London, in order to superintend the production of his *Postillon de Longjumeau*—charmingly sung, by the way, by that most agreeable and sympathetic vocalist, Miss Rainforth—his entire ignorance of English caused him no little embarrassment; and he used to relate an amusing anecdote of his interview with an apothecary equally unskilled in French. Neither of them being able to understand a word the other said, the composer bethought himself of trying Latin, and enquired as classically as he could how often he ought to take certain pills that had been prescribed for him.

"*Capiendum totâ nocte*," gravely replied the chemist.

"I was horrified," said Adam, "at the thought of passing the whole night in swallowing pills, and applied to my physician, who laughingly assured me that the apothecary's Latin intended to signify, 'to be taken every evening.'"

While Halévy—the most conscientious of musicians—was putting the finishing touch to his *Mousquetaires de la Reine*, he heard someone in the courtyard of the house where he lived singing an air which seemed familiar to him. On listening attentively, he recognised it as one of his latest inspirations for the new work, and flew into a violent rage, accusing himself of having involuntarily appropriated the idea of another composer. Ringing for his servant, he bade him ascertain who the singer was, and presently he learnt that he was one of the workmen employed in painting the outside of the house.

"Ask him to come up here," said Halévy; and, on the man's appearance, enquired where he had first heard the air he had been singing.

"*Ma foi, monsieur*," replied the individual addressed, "I picked it up the other day out of a piece they were rehearsing at the Opéra Comique, while we were repainting the interior."

"Ah!" said Halévy, with a sigh of relief, "you have an excellent memory; but," he added, half in soliloquy, "I was terribly afraid that mine was a better one!"

Among the innumerable visitors to Rossini's villa, at Passy, was a certain Italian marquis, an amateur musician of no particularly good repute, who continually pestered the maestro for an autographic recommendation of his compositions, on the plea that he was a poor man, and that such a testimonial would materially increase their sale. Wearied by his importunities, the author of *Guillaume Tell* at last consented, and complied with the request as follows:

"I have a very agreeable recollection of the Marquis de S——'s music."

"G. ROSSINI."

This passport to fame was, of course, triumphantly exhibited by the recipient, and one of the writer's friends, happening to see it, enquired how he could possibly have expressed a favourable opinion of music which was a barefaced imitation of his own.

"Perhaps that is why I like it," replied Rossini with a twinkle in his eye. "It is always pleasant, you know, to recognise an old acquaintance."

One of the many postulants for his approbation was a young musician, who brought him a funeral march of his composition in memory of Meyerbeer, lately dead. Rossini looked through it attentively.

"Not bad," he said, "but it would have been still better if Meyerbeer had written it in memory of you."

The same irrepressible humourist briefly summed up his opinion as to the relative merits of Mendelssohn and Wagner by saying that, whereas the former had composed "songs without words," the latter had only written "words without songs."

Offenbach's passion for roulette was proverbial. When his *Princesse de Trébizonde* was produced at the Baden Theatre, the major part of the liberal honorarium received for it speedily returned to M. Dupressoir's coffers through the medium of the croupier's rake.

"If this goes on," dryly remarked Maître Jacques to a fellow-sufferer, while their respective stakes were being swept away, "I shall soon not have a note left."

"You are luckier than I am," ruefully observed his companion, "for your head is full of them."

"That may be," retorted Offenbach, "but, unfortunately, they don't pass current at the roulette."

During his stay there, I remember his

exhibiting with great delight to a circle of Parisian journalists the washing-bill of a local laundress, evidently desirous of displaying her proficiency in the Gallic tongue; one item of which especially fascinated him.

"How do you think she has spelt 'trois paires de chaussettes?'" he asked one after another. "You'll never guess, if you try for a week;" and, extracting from his pocket-book the document in question, he handed it round with a broad grin of intense enjoyment. It ran thus:

"3 pères cho 7."

During Weber's short sojourn in Paris, on his way to London in 1826, two things appear principally to have caught his fancy, Boieldieu's new opera, *La Dame Blanche*, and the excellence of the oysters. Writing of the former to Winkler, he bids him have it translated, put on the stage by "Musje" Marschner, and played as soon as possible, saying:

"Such a comic opera has never been composed since the *Figaro*."

In a notice of Wagner, recently published in Germany, the following anecdote is related of one of his visits to Cologne. At the hotel where he was staying, the best suite of rooms were occupied by a Prussian General, who had arrived on a tour of inspection. One evening, while at work in his solitary chamber, the sound of music immediately under his window struck the composer's ear. It was doubtless a serenade in his honour, and he naturally felt gratified by the flattering attention. When it was over, he opened the window, and was beginning to express his thanks to the performers in well-chosen terms, when, to his surprise and confusion, his harangue was interrupted by a voice from below rudely bidding him hold his tongue, and intimating, amid roars of laughter from the assembled spectators, that the compliment was not intended for him, but for the General!

The only French musician for whom Wagner appears to have entertained a real friendship was Victor Massé, then holding the important post of *Chef des Chœurs* at the Opera, and one of the few Parisian appreciators of the foredoomed *Tannhäuser*. The other principal composers were either hostile or indifferent, and the critics, almost without exception, dead against the new comer. The latter's great crime, however, in the opinion of the Jockey Club, was his very natural refusal to permit the interpolation of a ballet, and one of that body

gravely justified his share in the disturbance which took place on the third and last performance of the work by saying:

"If the piece had been allowed to stand on its own merits, it might have had a run, and how could we possibly have shown ourselves in the 'foyer' without even a 'rat' to talk to!"

The well-known pianist, Leopold de Meyer, is the hero of an anecdote which, "*se non è vero, è ben trovato*." He was playing some years ago before an Archduke of Austria, and in his anxiety to please his illustrious auditor, exerted himself so strenuously that he literally perspired at every pore. At the conclusion of the concert, the Archduke deigned to express a wish that the artist should be presented to him.

"Monsieur," blandly remarked his Imperial Highness, "I have heard Thalberg (a pause, and a low bow from the pianist), "I have heard Liszt" (another pause, and a still lower bow); "but I never yet met with anyone" (a third pause, and a quasi-genuflexion on the part of Leopold de Meyer), "who perspired as you do!"

## MERMAIDS.

WHEN, in olden days, storm-tost sailors returned to their homes, no tales were more marvellous—even in a wonderful budget—than those they narrated of the strange creatures which basked in southern seas. Their audience was as yet unspoiled by the everyday instalments of more wonderful fact and fiction which their great-grandchildren find in the daily newspaper, and hung with interest by the winter fire-side and in the gloaming of a summer's night on the narrative of the returned wanderer, who told of distant ports and foreign ways, dangerous voyages, uncertain winds, and peril from famine or from war. But most of all they delighted to hear those legends of the secrets of the sea in telling which the traveller was himself more deeply moved than even when he told those impressive, and sometimes gruesome, tales which boasted the attraction of personal participation in their wonders.

Belief in the sea-serpent is not yet extinct. Every year we hear of him, and generally when we have most time on our hands to think of him—say in August or September. The crew of some ship (often American) is reported to have seen with astonishment and dismay a great sea-

monster disporting himself on the surface of the waves. Sometimes an attempt at detailed description and measurement is made. But although it is not impossible that in the immense leagues of water-covered world there may still be some great creatures which have not yet been scientifically observed and described, the proof of the mariner's sea-serpent is still lacking. The ship in which are the observers is always too distant or passes too swiftly to allow very accurate observations to be made. The sea-serpent, or rather, some undescribed marine monster of a nearly extinct kind, may exist, but we still want confirmation. The Challenger—on the look-out for marvels—saw it not.

But of the mermaid, what is to be said? She rose out of the water with lovely face and bust, and long shining hair—sometimes she combed her hair and gazed at her dazzling reflection in a hand or looking glass; but only her body was human; from the waist downwards she was a fish, with fish's scales and tail. What of her? We propose to bring together here some notes from the literatures of various peoples as to this strange being.

We may begin with the story of a Scottish mermaid, who anticipated the medical women of this century in her desire to give sound advice. A young woman died of consumption in Renfrewshire, in that long-past age which we call "once upon a time." Her funeral passed along the high-road by the Clyde above Port Glasgow, and as it passed, a mermaid rose from the Clyde, and said:

If they wad drink nettles in March,  
And eat muggins in May,  
Sae mony braw maidens  
Wadna gang to the clay.

This was, for the times, sensible advice, for both mugwort (or muggins) and nettles were valued and largely used by our prudent forefathers. The roots of mugwort used to be collected on St. John's Day. The Saxon leech-books say it puts away madness. Nettles are still used in agricultural districts, or were used until very recently, and tea made from nettle-tops is said in Derbyshire to cure nettle-rash. Another mermaid who dwelt in Galloway found a lover sighing for his mistress, who, like the Port Glasgow damsel, suffered from consumption, and thus bid him good cheer.

Wad ye let the bonnie Mary die i' your hand,  
And the mugwort flowering i' the land?

He administered the mugwort-juice to

his fair, and she was restored to health. The Galloway mermaid was more useful than she of the Clyde, but perhaps she had less foul waters to struggle through.

In the curious Scotch chapbook, *The Comical Sayings of Paddy from Cork*, which is attributed to Dugald Graham, the skellat bellman of Glasgow, we find the mermaidens in very odd company. "Them that have no money to pay the priest for a pardon," said Paddy to his neighbour Tom, "or those who are drowned or die by themselves in the fields without a priest, are lost, and sent away as blackguard scoundrels to wander up and down, while the world stands among the brownies, fairies, mermaids, sea-devils, and water kelpies."\*

But, indeed, if all these tales were true, what good could be said of the mermaid? Think of the story of Maurice Connor, the Irish piper. Maurice was blind, but like the piper in Redgauntlet, he was not the less a man of remarkable skill and fame. Like his German rival, the Pied Piper, who worked such havoc in Hamelin town, he played a magical air; whence he had obtained and learned it no one knew. But, whenever he began to play, old men and young maids, grey matrons and lusty youths, began to caper and dance, and continued to do so until the music ceased. One day Maurice went to the sea-shore and piped there, and all the fish jumped and leapt in their desire to be near the magic music. Maurice, however, had wooed his fate. "Up came a mermaid and whispered to Maurice of the charms of the land beneath the sea, and the blind piper danced after her into the salt sea, followed by the fish, and was never seen more."† Here the mermaid caught the man. In the usual course of these stories the man catches the mermaid. He sees her disporting herself by the shore, and secures some article belonging to her; the mermaid becomes a beautiful woman, and lives with him; but, whenever she obtains possession of her property, she vanishes once more and for ever in the sea. Thus, from Shetland we have a tale of a young man of Uist, who, one moonlight evening, as he walked by the shore of a voe, or small bay, saw, to his surprise, a number of people dancing on the shore, and near them lay several seal-skins. All the dancers seized their skins and vanished at his approach, save one whose skin he

\* "Collected Writings of Dugald Graham," Vol. ii., p. 201.

† Baring Gould, "Curious Myths," pp. 432, 433.

had time to conceal. The owner was a lovely sea-girl, who implored him to return to her her seal dress, as without it she could not return to her brethren below the water. But the young man was full of love, and obdurate, and at last, to make the best of her lot, the maiden consented to marry her captor. They lived happily many years, and several children were born, whose only trace of marine descent was a thin web between their fingers, and a bend in their hands, resembling, says Keightley (*Fairy Mythology*, page 170), that of the fore-paws of a seal, "distinctions which characterise the descendants of the family to the present day." But the mother was often sad, and would wander down to the shore, and converse in an unknown tongue with a large seal which made its appearance when a certain signal was given. One day one of the children brought to his mother a curious prize he had found behind a stack. It was her lost seal-skin. She had no hesitation as to what was to be done. It was hard to leave her children, but she must go quickly if she was to escape before her husband regained possession of the skin. She kissed her children fondly, and hastened to the shore. In a few minutes the husband entered his house, and when he heard what had occurred, he hurried to the beach, but just in time to see his wedded partner of so many years take the form of a seal and leap into the sea. She was met by the large seal, and, as she turned away with him, she called to the disconsolate lover on the rock: "Farewell, and may all good fortune attend you! I loved you well while I was with you, but I always loved my first husband better." And, so saying, she disappeared. This tale of a magic dress is very familiar to all those who have studied popular tales, and the stories are usually grouped under the subject-title of the swan-maidens.

A variant of the Shetland tale is given us in an Italian story of a youth, who, in the reign of King Roger of Sicily, obtained possession of a wonderfully beautiful sea-maiden. A son was born of the marriage. But from the moment of her capture onwards, the mermaid was dumb. This greatly grieved her husband; and one day, when he had been jeered at and provoked by his companions, who said he had married no woman but a spectre, he commanded his wife to speak to him, and threatened to kill their son before her eyes if she refused. Then the patient,

dumb spectre spake, but only to tell him that, by forcing her to speak, he had lost a good wife; then she vanished. Some years afterwards, when the boy was playing with other boys on the shore, his mother appeared and took him into the sea, where he was—so runs the story—drowned; but in the true story of fairy-tales we may rather hope he is with his sea-mother, "in the branching jaspers under the sea."

In the south-west of Ireland the story is still told of one Shea, who won a mermaid for wife, and kept her so long as he retained the talisman—in this case, a cap—a somewhat unusual article for a mermaid. She escaped at last, and was more like her Italian relative than like her Scottish, for she retained a grudge against her captor and all of his name. Every Shea who ventures to a certain spot in Dingle Bay will be drowned, for there the Shea of tradition met the mermaid. "My informant," says Mr. Nutt, in 1883, "would not venture there, 'not for Dinish, if it turned into gold,' for, as he justly said, 'life is shweeter than money.'"

But some mermaids are more tender-hearted. Andersen tells of a Danish sea-nymph, who saves a prince's life in a shipwreck, and, for love of him, leaves her native element. She is with him always, till he weds a princess, and then her heart breaks, and she becomes an elf. And who that has read De la Motte Fouqué's *Undine*—the reading of which, despite critics of too harsh judgment, is an epoch in a man's literary life—can forget the story of that interview where the neglected water-nymph seeks her false knight, Hildebrand, and kisses him to death. Mermaids who love mortal men have indeed as hard fates as mortal men who love mermaids. There is a long and curious story told in South Småland, which Thorpe calls *The King's Son and Messeria*. The King's son, in fulfilment of a vow made by his mother, is obliged to dwell for a time under the sea with a mermaid, who sets him the curious and difficult tasks which, in our British fairy-tales, the cruel stepmother gives to the helpless, charming step-daughter. Thus he has to wash white yarn black and black yarn white; he has to separate the barley from the wheat in a barrel where they are mixed together; he has to cleanse the stalls of a hundred oxen—stalls which have never been cleansed



for twenty years. All these tasks are accomplished for him by the intervention of no fairy-godmother, but of the mermaid's beautiful daughter, Messeria. Ultimately the King's son and Messeria are married in the mermaid's palace, and rise to the surface of the sea. Then the King's son is seized with a violent longing to return to his father's house to see how things go on there. Messeria desires that they should go first to her father's house—for he also is an earthly King—but consents to her bridegroom's departure if he will go quickly, and eat nothing till he returns to her. But when the King's son reaches his father's palace, his scruples as to food are overcome so far that he eats a peppercorn, and instantly he forgets his Messeria, and all his life with the mermaid—so much so that he consents to his wedding being celebrated with the princess of a neighbouring kingdom. Messeria, sad at heart, journeyed to the King's son's palace, and became a waiting-maid. She had with her two doves, and when the wedding-feast was in progress, she threw down three grains of wheat to them in the banquetting-hall, but the cock picked them all up, leaving nothing for his mate, who said, to the wonder of all:

"Out upon thee!  
Thou hast served me  
As the King's son served Messeria."

This incident was three times repeated during the banquet, and at last the King's son remembered all the past, recognised Messeria, and clasping her to his breast, declared that she alone should be his bride.

Oh, train me not, sweet mermaid, with thy note,  
To drown me in thy sister's flood of tears;  
Sing, siren, for thyself and I will dote;  
Spread o'er the silver waves thy golden hairs,  
And as a bed I'll take thee, and there lie,  
And in that glorious supposition think  
He gains by death that hath such means to die.

So says Antipholus of Syracuse, and from this text we may note the mermaid's song, and the mermaid's golden hair.

The singing of the mermaids is alluded to by Thomas Cogan, Master of Arts and Bachelor of Physicke, in his *Haven of Health* (1605), when citing Virgil, he says: "Women are much like to a wild beast called a panther, to whom it is said that herds of cattle do resort. . . . But when the panther hath them within his reach, he easily preyeth upon the poor cattle, being utterly dismayed with his fierce looks, or, as the mermaidens, whom poets fain with their sweet melodies to draw such unto

them as pass by, and then to devour them." Gunnyon in the second last paragraph of his volume on *Scottish Life and History in Song and Ballad* (1879) says: "The mermaid was a formidable being, beautiful above as Aphrodite, with blue eyes, ruddy lips, a smile sweeter than the bee, and a voice surpassing the songs of birds. Doomed was the luckless knight whom her fascinations induced to seize her hand. Soon his drowning scream was heard from the whirling eddy." This is a somewhat glowing description, but it brings us near to the sirens, who are probably the ancestresses of the mediæval mermaid, although the descent is crossed with legends of Asia, which we may be excused from entering upon here. It will be remembered that the Lørdlei, sung of by Heine, enticed the fisher in his tiny skiff by her singing. The mermaid of the old house of Knockdalion, near the water of Eirvan, was a singer, too, in her way. A black stone lay near the house, and on this stone the mermaid would sit at nights for hours singing and combing her yellow hair. The mistress of Knockdalion caused the stone to be broken, as she believed the singing annoyed her child. When the mermaid found her seat gone, she sang:

Ye may think on your cradle—I'll think on my  
stone,  
And there'll never be an heir to Knockdalion again.

Soon after the cradle was found overturned and the baby dead under it. The family became extinct.\* So much for despising a mermaid's singing.

The splendour and colour of the mermaid's hair are traditional. The mermaid is of frequent use in heraldry, and this is how Guillim, in his *Display*, describes her: "He beareth argent a mermaid gules, crined or, holding a mirror in her right hand, a comb in her left. By the name of Ellis." This red mermaid with golden locks borne on the shield of the Ellis family, is reproduced in a portion of a window formerly in St. Nicholas Church, Yarmouth, now in the rectory of All Saints, South Elmham, near Halesworth, Suffolk. It is thus described by Mr. Syer Cuming: "In this example the damsel has a profusion of long hair, one lock of which she holds in her left hand, whilst in her right is placed a large, square, double-toothed comb. The lower or fishy portion of her person, commencing at the hips, is covered with large scales. This painting is apparently referable to the end of the fifteenth or early part of

\* "Chambers' Popular Rhymes," etc., pp. 331, 352.

the sixteenth century.\* The mermaid which is one of the supporters of the arms of the Company of Fishmongers has no comb, unlike Lord Tennyson's mermaid, who gives voice to the feeling of all authenticated mermaidens when she sings:

"I would sing to myself the whole of the day;  
With a comb of pearl I would comb my hair;  
And still as I comb'd I would sing and say,  
'Who is it loves me? who loves not me?'  
I would comb my hair till my ringlets would fall  
Low adown, low adown,  
From under my starry, sea-weed crown  
Low adown, and around,  
And I should look like a fountain of gold  
Springing alone  
With a shrill inner sound,  
Over the throne  
In the midst of the hall."

It was the yellow hair of a Forfarshire mermaid which nearly ruined the young laird of Lorntie. When riding home one night from a hunting excursion, accompanied by a servant, he heard cries of distress from a lake which lay hidden in a wood. He made his way quickly to the spot, and saw a beautiful woman in the last stage of exhaustion. She called to him by name to help her, and he rushed into the lake, and was about to grasp "the long yellow locks, which lay like hanks of gold upon the water," when his servant, who had followed him into the water, seized him and dragged him away. "Bide, Lorntie—bide a blink," the man called, "that wauling madame was nae other—God sauf us!—than the mermaid." And so indeed "that wauling madame" was, for as Lorntie prepared to mount his horse and ride off, she rose in the water and cried in anger:

"Lorntie, Lorntie,  
Were it na your man,  
I had gart your heart's bluid  
Skirl in my pan."†

A curious book, with an odd title, was a year ago published by Mr. Frederic T. Hall, and one passage in it is so pertinent to the subject of mermaids, that we may be allowed to cite it without in any way committing ourselves to agreeing with Mr. Hall in all his deductions and inferences. "The pedigree of the fairies of romance," he says,‡ "is that of an idea evolved from obscure traditions based on facts. The earliest legends connect the idea of sorcery and witchcraft with beautiful

women. Lilith, the rabbinic first wife of Adam, was gifted with marvellous beauty, especially in her hair, and used spells and magic arts. A double of Lilith is probably to be found in Leila, a leading figure of Persian romance, of inexplicable fascination, of dark complexion, with long black hair, beautiful only to her lovers, but driving them to madness. The Babylonian epic of Izdhubar records his being withstood on the sea-coast by two women, Siduri and Sabitu, whom we may strongly suspect of being sorceresses. Kirke (Circe) is at once an enchantress and a nymph of rare beauty. The Sibyls were gifted with such magic as compelled even the gods, and one, at least, was of such beauty originally as to have been wooed by Apollo. The Gorgons, originally connected with the sea, have the magic power of turning all who look upon them to stone. They, too, had beautiful hair, which, in the case of Medusa, captivated Neptune, and procured its metamorphosis into serpents. The Sirens also were female nymphs, who, inhabiting cliffs near the sea, bewildered passing mariners by the sweetness of their voices, and allured them to their death. These find their exact counterparts in the Lorelei of the Rhine and the mermaidens of all the Northern seas, endued with irresistible powers of sweet music, by which they allure mortals to their ruin. They sing in sweet and plaintive tones, and comb their golden hair. In passing, it may be noted that St. Paul refers to long hair as the glory of a woman; that mystic power resided in the hair of Samson; and that Mahomet had long hair. In the Apocalyptic vision, a swarm of monstrous beings are, on the sounding of the fifth trumpet, described as rising out of the smoke of the bottomless pit. They are composite and monstrous in shape, endued with special powers to hurt man. They are under command of the arch-fiend Apollyon, and they have long hair. Sorceresses and witches of all time have had dishevelled hair when entering on their sombre rites and incantations, and the Dame du Lac—a fay of romance—had wonderful hair." To this it may be added as an additional link between the sirens and the mermaids, that, as if to illustrate the classical tale that the sirens had once wings, but lost them when vanquished by the muses, there are existing representations of seventeenth century work of mermaids with wings.

\* "Journal Brit. Arch. Assoc.," Vol. xxxviii., p. 60.

† "Popular Rhymes," p. 332.

‡ "The Pedigree of the Devil," 1883, p. 57,

Oberon says to Puck, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* :

Thou remember'st  
Since once I sat upon a promontory,  
And heard a mermaid, on a dolphin's back  
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath  
That the rude sea grew civil at her song,  
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres  
To hear the sea-maid's music.

The learned commentators find in this passage a reference to Mary Queen of Scots. That she is the mermaid is obscurely indicated by the mention of the dolphin—the Dauphin of France being her first husband. “The rude sea” represents Scotland, and the Earls of Northumberland, Westmoreland, and the Duke of Norfolk, who followed Mary's fortunes in preference to those of Elizabeth, are figured by the words “certain stars.” The commentators may be right, but we think it extremely improbable. From the context it seems much more probably a poetic reminiscence of that fête at Kenilworth when Leicester entertained Elizabeth with the revels described by Laneham and (from Laneham's narrative) by Sir Walter Scott.

The tail is such an important feature of a mermaid's appearance that it deserves a paragraph to itself. Grimm, in his great work on German mythology, notes that in many of the stories of white women, swan necks, etc., the main idea is that something has to be done to release a banned spirit doomed to undergo certain strange appearances, and often the deliverance can only be accomplished by the hero doing something very disagreeable, as kissing a snake or toad; thus Launcelot kisses the mouth of the dragon, and the dragon turns into a lady. Now and then, he adds, the apparition of the sea-maiden is explained by the facts that she is a water-witch or nix, and they, too, need redemption. But such mer-women, he goes on to say, generally assume wholly or in part the shape of a snake or fish. Some of the early writers on natural history, in their zeal to depict the mermaid correctly, gave her two tails,

and in a foreign work of 1508, the *Margarita Philosophica*, printed at Basle, Mr. Cuming found a little woodcut of fish in the sea, and among them a mermaid without arms, but with two tails, which rise on either hand as high as the lady's coronated head. Such pictorial representations do not help us much as to the idea of sailors as to the mermaidens, but if we were to believe the numerous stories of the capture of mermaids and mermen, which Pliny and others credit, there should be small difficulty in getting an accurate portrait. In 1775, in 1794, and again in 1822, mermaids were exhibited in London, and were very successful attractions. That of 1822 was made by the lower part of a dried monkey being concealed in the skin of a salmon, and the whole being varnished over.

Sir James Emerson Tennent regarded the dugong as the original of the mermaid stories, but we may believe it that the seal of our own coasts has many a time been taken for a semi-human monster. Miss Gordon Cumming, in her narrative of a cruise in a French man-of-war, gives us a more pleasing foundation for mariners' tales. No female in Marquesas, in Polynesia, is allowed to enter a canoe; consequently, when a foreign vessel arrives, the women can only inspect it by swimming over to it. “Small wonder if sailors, perceiving these fair-skinned beauties with their tresses of long black hair floating around them, suppose their visitors to be a company of mermaids.” Charming mermaids, no doubt, but we hear nothing of their silvery voices, or the shining comb or glass.

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# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

No. 865. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 1885.

PRICE TWOPENCE

## ONLY A BUSINESS MAN.

By MAY DRYDEN.

### CHAPTER XV.

PHOEBE'S mind had been very much unsettled by the new friendship she had made; for her acquaintance with Gordon and Clarence soon developed into what promised to be a real and lasting friendship. She was bewildered and almost dazed by the new lights that poured in upon her. She did not flag in her work—did not neglect any of her daily duties; she even performed them with an added zeal and cheerfulness; but they were to her no longer the one object of her existence. She began to have some perception of a life outside them, a comforting feeling that for her, too, as well as for other girls, pleasant things might happen. It was a wonderfully sustaining thought to her that, however trying to the temper and spirits home-worries might be, there was another home where she was always welcome, and where, for her at least, there were no worries at all. Not that Phoebe often availed herself of the hearty invitation Clarence had given her to consider herself free of the Holme. She had not time to spare for frequent visits, even to so kind a friend; but she knew that Clarence would be truly glad to see her whenever she did go, and Clarence rarely let a week pass without coming to see her, always staying with her an hour or two, and helping and petting her as she had never been helped or petted before. It was something quite new to her to be an object of solicitude to anyone but Luke and Matty, and she enjoyed the sensation with her whole heart.

As for Matilda, she had, from the first, asserted that "she had no time to put on

company manners for anyone," and soon fell into the habit of treating Clarence as she did Phoebe, with an affectionate assumption of superior wisdom which infinitely amused both the elder girls. Phoebe began to find that she really could be amused now; she had hardly thought it possible before she knew Clarence.

Even Mrs. Carfield fell a victim to Clarence's charms. For her friend's sake the kind-hearted girl conciliated the peevish invalid, listening silently and pitifully to her long and wearisome complaints. She very soon learned to feel really sorry for the unhappy woman. She was so bright, and strong, and full of life herself, that it seemed to her simply dreadful that anyone should exist in a state of continual feebleness and fretfulness. Besides which she could not help grieving for anyone whose affections and hopes were centred on a youth so sure to disappoint them as Daniel. The more she saw of Phoebe's poetical brother, the less she liked him. His unmanly nature, his weak character, his morbid egotism and sentimentalism, were all alike repugnant to a mind whose strongest characteristics were strength and unselfishness. She was worried and distressed by his too evident admiration of her, more especially because she saw how anxious it made Phoebe and Luke. Daniel, in his blind self-conceit, would not see how distasteful his company was to her, and was plunging every day more deeply into love with her.

Meantime poor Netta Heard watched his affection with a growing pain which was rapidly telling upon her health. Could she have persuaded herself that Daniel's fickleness was a fault she would have been far happier, but it seemed to her that it was an easier thing to believe herself unworthy of his love than to admit a flaw in

the character of her hero. She grieved for him even more deeply than for herself, for her keen perception showed her what Daniel would never see unless told so in plain language—that Clarence Fenchurch did not care for him in the least. She shared the general attraction towards Clarence, but marvelled greatly at her insensibility and hardness of heart. Poor Netta could not understand how any girl could be blind to the perfection of her poet cousin, and wept in secret over the cruelty which must sooner or later condemn him to the misery of a lifelong sorrow. Sometimes she laid plans for bringing Clarence and her cousin together, her imagination sketching a scene wherein, exercising a wonderful power of persuasion, she should open Clarence's eyes to Daniel's virtues, lead her to him, see them exchange their first embrace, and then go home, contented, and die. Death for herself was the end of all her imagined schemes at present. She would die and be buried under a grassy, daisied mound, without any tombstone to tell who reposed there, and Daniel and Clarence should visit her grave and lay fresh flowers on it, standing hand-in-hand to look at it and saying, "She died for us."

Poor Netta! Foolish, romantic, little body that she was, there was, in spite of her folly, something very touching in her devotion to her cousin, and it was not wonderful that, when time after time she left the Carfields' house, looking more weary and sad than when she entered it, Luke should clench his hand, and set his teeth, and tell Phoebe he should like to shake that young rascal until he had shaken all his nonsense out of him. Netta's distress troubled Phoebe very greatly, the more so that she felt herself quite powerless to comfort her. It was when musing over this trouble one day, that she looked so grave and sober that Clarence said to her:

"I only came to Wilton just in time for you, Phoebe. Another year and you would have been a confirmed old woman. Now I have some hope that, with time and patience, I may develop you backwards into a young person."

"Did you ever plant a daisy the wrong way up, that it might come up a different colour?" said Phoebe. "I am like such a daisy, I think. All my ideas are turned topsy-turvy, and I can feel my colour changing already. The process is not unpleasant, only it is very upsetting, you

know. And I am haunted by a kind of feeling that I am not doing right."

The girls were sitting at the window darning socks, and, as she spoke, Phoebe drew a fresh one over her hand and sighed.

"Why do you sigh?" said Clarence. "Do not be afraid. Depend upon it, we are meant to take such happiness as comes in our way. Do you imagine you will be a less useful member of society because life looks bright and pleasant to you? Will you lay the threads of worsted one with less regularly across that big hole, because you and Luke took such a pleasant walk with Gordon and me last Sunday afternoon?"

"Your brother lent me a volume of Carlyle the other day. He says we ought not to care about being happy."

"Yes; but he never said we were to care about being miserable. He means we are not to strive after happiness. When did you ever do that, little bee?"

"Of course you are quite right," said Matty decidedly. "As for me, it does not take much to make me happy. Only give me the kitchen to myself and plenty of cooking to do, and I am quite content. But for you, Phoebe, it is different; you shall be a full-blown, double pink daisy, one of these days, and then someone will come along and transplant you, and quite proper, too."

"She is a pink daisy now," laughed Clarence. "Matty, your words must have gone home; our daisy knows more about the gardener who is coming than you do."

Matty looked sharply and suspiciously at Phoebe's glowing cheeks, and said:

"Of course I was only jesting. Phoebe is far too young to think of anything of that sort yet."

With which grandmotherly speech she retired to the kitchen, disregarding the laughter that followed her, and feeling quite secure in her own mind that she had put a stop to the matter for the present.

"Daisy? Was that what you called her, Clarence?" said a voice at the window.

The girls started, and Phoebe blushed more deeply than before, for there leant Gordon, with his arms folded on the window-sill.

"Did you call Miss Carfield Daisy?" he repeated.

"Yes; why not? Is it not a pretty name?"

"Unsuitable. I know a much better one."

"Do you? But first tell me what you

are doing here at this time of day. I thought you were gone to see Everett and would not be back for ever so long. I am not ready to come home yet, and nobody asked you to come to tea here."

"Indeed but somebody did. I met Carfield and he brought me home. There he is to answer for himself;" then, as Luke entered the room: "Carfield, did you not ask me to come to tea?"

"Who disputes it?" said Luke.

"My sister here, who is quite sorry to see me."

"Never mind. Phoebe and I will make you welcome; will we not, little woman?"

Phoebe smiled and nodded, and Gordon said slowly:

"I wonder what I should do if you would not. Retire into my hermit's shell again, I suppose. Do you know, Mistress Phoebe, you and your brother are the very first friends I have ever made."

"Are we?" said Phoebe gently. "I wonder at that. I should have thought you were a man to make friends easily."

"No; there are very few people who know me in any but my business capacity. Do you know what they call me in town, Mistress Phoebe? They call me money-grubber."

"Gordon, be quiet!" said Clarence, looking at him anxiously. "You have been to see Everett, then, to-day after all?"

"Yes. Come, Miss Carfield, tell me if you think I look as a man should do who cares for nothing in the world but money?"

"Don't answer him, Phoebe," said Clarence. "Do not encourage him to be morbid."

Indeed, Phoebe would have found it hard to answer him at that moment; so great was her pity for him that she felt a suspicious tightening at the throat, and had much trouble to squeeze back the tears from her downcast eyes.

Clarence went on speaking:

"Gordon, tell me now what name it was you thought would be so much more appropriate to Phoebe than Daisy."

"Heartsease," said Gordon gravely. "Do you not agree with me, Carfield?"

"Yes, indeed," said Luke heartily. "She has been my Heartsease ever since she was so high," putting his hand on the window-sill.

"I came on business," said Gordon, changing the conversation abruptly. "We are going to start a library for our mill-hands down in the hollow. I have built a

suitable room near the cottages, and now I want to buy the books."

"Gordon," exclaimed Clarence anxiously, "I thought you had made up your mind to give that up for the present—that we could not afford it."

"We must give up something else, dear, and afford that. I would have waited a while, but I find that in a rash moment I spoke of it to one of the hands, made the young fellow a kind of promise, and I cannot go back from my word. We'll economise some other way, and bring things straight."

Phoebe listened anxiously. She knew they were rich, this brother and sister, and she knew that the local gossips said they were mean and grasping. Was there any truth in the rumour? Why should they be restricted now in their plans for want of a little money? Much as she reproached herself for doubting them for a moment, she longed to be convinced that they were all she wished them to be, to have their fair fame established beyond a doubt.

Gordon saw her look of pain.

"Come," said he gaily, "I did not come down here to put more wrinkles on your grave little brow. You are too sensitive, Mistress Phoebe. Do you mind my calling you Mistress Phoebe?"

Phoebe told him gravely, "No." She could not say that every gentle word he spoke to her gave her a thrill of delight, that she loved to be singled out by him, even by a pet name that he alone called her.

"Let's proceed to business, then," said Gordon. "We are going to have three hundred volumes to start our library with, and I want you and your brother to help us."

"My dear fellow," said Luke, "you could hardly come to two worse people to help you in such a matter. Phoebe and I have so little time for reading."

"I expect you will prove to have read more sensible books than any young people of my acquaintance."

"Then," said Phoebe brightly, "I am afraid your expectations will be disappointed. But it will be nice to know what books you choose; so, if you like, we will form ourselves into a committee after tea, as soon as I've put Bunyan to bed. You will let me bring my sewing to the meeting, will you not?"

It was a great treat for Phoebe, but Gordon and Clarence would have done their work more expeditiously if they had done it alone. Clarence it was who did most of the choosing. She had read more

than any of them, and they were betrayed into so much pleasant conversation, as one book after another was named and discussed, that not more than fifty had been selected when ten o'clock struck, and Clarence rose to put on her hat. Then Phoebe, who had been very quiet all the evening, ventured to make a suggestion.

"These books are for the hands, are they not? Would it not be well to consult one of them before you choose them all?"

"Aye, that is a capital idea, Mistress Phoebe. But whom? If I asked Farmworth, he would say bound volumes of the Sporting News. If I asked Jones, he would suggest a book on the treatment of dogs; and if I consulted old Isaac Leighton, he would not be able to name anything but the Cottage Gardener's Dictionary."

"I dare say," cried Clarence; "but Deborah would be able to help us. Were you not thinking of her, Phoebe?"

"Yes. Would she not enjoy it very much? She seemed so happy to have some rational conversation at your tea-party the other day."

"It is the very thing, and I am much obliged to you for thinking of it," said Gordon warmly. "We will ask her to come to our next committee meeting. When can you come to our house to tea, Mistress Phoebe, and help us to choose the rest of the books?"

"I am afraid I cannot come to tea any evening, but I might come at about half-past seven, if that will do; will it?"

"It must, I suppose," said Clarence discontentedly; "but it would be much cosier if you could have tea with us. Do be a naughty girl for once, Phoebe dear, and leave Matty to put the boy to bed."

"No, that would never do. Matty would do it directly if I asked her, but she has her hands full already. Besides, Bunyan worries her; she never can make him go to sleep."

"Well, then, come next Wednesday, as early as you can. We must make the most of what we can get of you, and be content."

"Gordon," said Clarence, as they walked home that evening, "what makes you mention Everett's absurd talk to Phoebe? Why should she know anything about it?"

"I do not know, dear," said Gordon, with a sadder intonation than ever in his low, sweet voice; "but, when I am with her, I feel impelled to tell her all about myself. Do you think she would judge me very hardly if she knew all?"

## AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS.

THE history of the Newspaper Press of America is a bulky one. It covers between four and five hundred of the large quarto pages of the official volumes of the reports of the United States Census Commissioners. By "boiling down" this huge mass of official facts and figures, we propose to give our readers a brief account of a sufficiently interesting subject.

Although the first English printed book bears the date of 1471, it is said that a printing-press existed in Mexico as early as 1540. Indeed, there is reason to suppose that a printing-press was sent across the Atlantic some years previous to that date, for there are records, whether authentic or not we are unable to say, of a book printed in Mexico in 1535. Between that year and 1600, at any rate, some ninety-three books are known to have been printed in Mexico, and some seven in Peru, principally on religious subjects. In Mexico, also, the germ of a newspaper appeared first on the American continent, for "gazettes" seem to have been regularly published there before the end of the seventeenth century. What were the literary characteristics of these early specimens we know not, but they cannot have been of a high order, for the Gazette de Mexico, as late as 1730, consisted almost entirely of "accounts of religious functions, descriptions of processions, consecrations of churches, beatifications of saints, festivals, and auto da fés," while civil and commercial affairs, and all the news from Europe, occupied but a small corner.

In that portion of America now known to us as the United States, the first printing-press was established about 1639. This was in Salem, Massachusetts, and the first book printed there was called The Freeman's Oath, the second or third being The Psalms in Metre, Faithfully Translated for the Use, Edification, and Comfort of the Saints in Publick and Private, especially in New England. There are American books of earlier date, but they were sent in MS. to England to be printed. There was not much demand, however, among the colonists for any kind of books wherever printed, and it is interesting to note that the first regular bookseller, by name Hezekiah Usher, did not appear until 1652. Even in Virginia, where the colonists were of a superior and even, for



those days, a cultured class, there was no printing-press before 1681.

The first American newspaper was established about 1705, and during the next thirty years many others were established, but all under the censorship of the Royal Governors of the several colonies. In the year 1735 began the first struggle for the freedom of the press, when the publisher of the New York Gazette was tried for publishing "false, scandalous, and malicious libels against the Government." The jury refused to bring in a verdict of guilty, notwithstanding the pressure employed by the Government; but although a measure of freedom was thus obtained, there was still for long after a close and jealous supervision. Twenty years after the trial just mentioned, the Principal of the College of Pennsylvania was imprisoned for six months for publishing a pamphlet reflecting on the Government; and still later, in 1769, a General McDougall, of New York, was imprisoned for a similar offence. There are many other instances on record of the severity with which the Colonial Governments dealt with printers, authors, and publishers who dared to discuss politics and criticise officialism.

The famous Stamp Act of 1765 operated very severely upon the Colonial press—so much so that a large number of the journals had to suspend. A few proprietors put their journals into mourning, while others published without titles, in the hope of evading the tax.

Some went on printing and publishing and ignored the Act, accepting all risks of defiance of the law, and thus exhibiting the first definite example of rebellion against the oppressive rule of the Crown, which afterwards developed to such great issues. It is a curious fact, nevertheless, that all the early American newspapers were principally filled with Transatlantic news. The readers seemed to care—for we may assume that editors then as now provided that which the tastes of their supporters demanded—far less to hear of what was going on at their own doors, than of the sayings and doings of the Old World. Hence they knew a great deal more about English and European politics than they did about the affairs of their fellows in the neighbouring colonies.

All this, however, rapidly changed as events ripened towards the great revolution. Then the Colonies began to realise that their interest and their cause were one, and that the most powerful influence they

could employ to mould and guide public opinion was the press, and especially the newspaper press. But political excitement alone will not make a newspaper flourish; and as the art of advertising was yet in its infancy, a great number of the journals called into existence by the war collapsed for want of pecuniary support when peace ensued. Printing and paper were excessively dear, and the business of a printer was regarded as a poor one even in Benjamin Franklin's day. Franklin himself did not give all his time to his printing-office, but acted as a Government clerk, and then as a postmaster, to eke out his livelihood. When Franklin established his newspaper in Philadelphia there was only one journal in the city, which that remarkable scientist and statesman contemptuously designated "a paltry thing, wretchedly managed." Yet the printer and publisher of this "paltry thing" was rich, and made his money out of a general printing business as well as out of his newspaper; so there were exceptions to the general poverty of the trade.

To turn back a little: we find the first newspaper published in Boston, in 1690. It was called, Public Occurrences, both Foreign and Domestick; but for all the brave show of its title, it never reached a second number. It was suppressed by the authorities of Massachusetts, and the only copy now known to exist is in the State-Paper Office, London.

The second newspaper established was in 1696. It was in the form of an official gazette, chiefly a republication of English official papers, and it was issued under the orders of the Governor of New York.

The first Boston paper above-mentioned was printed on three pages of a folded sheet, each page measuring seven by eleven inches, with two columns, while one page was left blank. The publisher's prospectus is a literary and historical curiosity, and deserves to be here transcribed. It ran: "It is designed that the Countrey shall be furnished once a month (or if any Glut of Occurrences happen, oftener) with an account of such considerable things as have arrived unto our Notice. In order hereunto, the Publisher will take what pains he can to obtain a Faithful Relation of all such things, and will particularly make himself beholden to such persons in Boston whom he knows to have been, for their own use, the diligent Observers of such matters. That which is herein proposed is, First, That Memorable Occurrences of

Divine Providence may not be neglected or forgotten, as they too often are. Secondly, That people everywhere may better understand the Circumstances of Publique Affairs, both abroad and at home : which may not only direct their Thoughts at all times, but at some times also to assist their Business and Negotiations. Thirdly, that something may be done toward the Curing, or at least the Charming of the Spirit of Lying which prevails among us, wherefore nothing shall be entered but what we have reason to believe is true, repairing to the best fountains for our Information. And when there appears any material mistake in anything that is collected, it shall be corrected in the next. Moreover the Publisher of these Occurrences is willing to engage, that whereas there are many False Reports maliciously made and spread among us, if any well-minded person will be at the pains to trace any such false Report, so as to find out and Convict the First Raiser of it, we will in this paper (unless just Advice be given to the contrary) expose the name of such person as A malicious Raiser of a False Report. It is supposed that none will dislike this Proposal but such as intend to be guilty of so villanous a Crime."

The admirable sentiments here disclosed are worthy the attention of even modern newspaper conductors. They entitled the exponent to a better fate, for the pious belief expressed in the last sentence proved ill-founded. The paper was suppressed, as we have said, and upon the ground that the repeal of the Star Chamber edicts of 1637 did not extend to the Colonies, where, therefore, no man not authorised by the Crown had a right to publish political news. It is consolatory to learn that the enterprising and high-minded printer, who was thus summarily "sat upon," was, two years later, appointed printer to the Governor and Council, and in that capacity for some years printed the Acts and Laws of the Colony of Massachusetts.

If we set aside the New York Gazette as hardly entitled to be called a newspaper, the second American journal was the Boston News Letter, published in 1704 "by authority," and edited by one John Campbell, then postmaster of Boston. It was composed almost, if not entirely, of the news letters which Campbell, in his official capacity as postmaster, had to prepare and send regularly to the Governors of the several provinces.

As the postmasters of those times were the official collectors, as well as the transmitters, of news, it came to be regarded as the correct thing for a postmaster to "run" a newspaper. So we find four postmasters of Boston in succession carrying on this journalistic work. In New Haven, in Providence, in New York, and in other places, the same thing was done.

The publisher of the Philadelphia paper which excited Benjamin Franklin's contempt and competition, was at one time postmaster of the city, and this gave him so much advantage in obtaining his news, as well as in distributing his papers, that Franklin had to take to bribing the "riders," or mail-carriers, to help him. Franklin "thought so meanly of the practice" of his opponent in this matter, "that when I afterwards came into the position"—of postmaster—"I took care never to imitate it."

The New England Courant was the fourth paper which had been tried in Boston, and its first appearance was on 7th August, 1721. The printer and publisher was James Franklin, who had formerly done the printing of Campbell's News Letter. It seems to have been the first pioneer of newspaper warfare, for it began by attacking the News Letter, the Government, the local officials, and even private individuals in a manner as independent as it was novel. Then it got into a tremendous controversy with the clergy on the subject of vaccination—the clergy being for, and the Courant against, inoculation. This continued for a year or so, when an Order in Council commanded "James Franklin" to desist from publishing the Courant, or any other paper, except under the supervision of the Secretary of the Province. But the paper came out all the same, the name of Benjamin being substituted for that of James as publisher, and thus it continued for several years more, until it was finally suspended. The incident of the Boston Courant is memorable in respect, first, of its being a new departure in journalism in America—setting a new fashion and opening up a wider and larger field—and second, because of the association with it of the famous name of Franklin. It does not appear, however, that Benjamin did much more than lend his name to the paper, for he must have settled in Philadelphia, where he went in his twenty-first year, while the Courant was still in existence. But the vigour and originality which characterised

the Boston Courant soon appeared in the Pennsylvania Gazette. This was the title of the paper established by Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia, in 1729, on the bones of a struggling enterprise bearing the pompous designation of The Universal Instructor in all Arts and Sciences, and Pennsylvania Gazette. After a time Franklin made this paper a power in the land, and it was the organ and mouth-piece of the revolutionary cause until, in 1777, it was suppressed during the British occupation of Philadelphia. It reappeared, and was one of the most valuable newspaper properties in the country down to 1824, and Franklin, who retired from its active management when he took up statesmanship, drew one thousand pounds per annum for many years from his successor, in lieu of profits.

The journals thus far mentioned were either monthly, weekly, or bi-weekly, and not until 1784 was the first daily newspaper established in the United States. This was Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser, the successor of the Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser, which Franklin opposed in Philadelphia. Latterly the journal was issued three times a week, until it faded into the Daily American. The first daily paper published in New York was The Argus, or Greenleaf's New Daily Advertiser, in 1787.

Between the date of the establishment of Campbell's newspaper above referred to, and the commencement of the revolt against England, altogether seventy-eight journals had been started in the American colonies, and thirty-nine were actually in existence when the War of Independence began. The population of the several Colonies was then only about three millions, and the circulation of each of the journals was very small. That of the Massachusetts papers, for instance, did not exceed about six hundred copies of each issue, and, besides, subscribers had a curious and awkward habit of stopping their subscriptions during the winter-time—why we know not, unless coals were dear, and literature was esteemed a luxury, to be cut off when economy was necessary.

As the ties of England were thrown off newspapers multiplied rapidly, for, as the States were organised and constitutions formulated, the freedom of the press was recognised as an indispensable part of the institutions of a free country. The Federal Constitution of the Union, however, has no law on the subject as it has none esta-

lishing freedom of speech or a national religion. But for some time after the Revolution, newspapers continued an uncertain and unattractive enterprise from a pecuniary point of view, until with peace came the gradual growth of parties, and the whole network of State and Federal politics. How they grew may be gathered from the fact that the census of 1840 returned one thousand four hundred and three newspapers and journals in active circulation.

It is since 1840, however, that the real development of the press of the United States has been, and the pace has been fully commensurate with the development of the country. It is now one of the best organised, best equipped, and most remunerative branches of business in that most business-like land. It is alike the feeder and the nursing of industry, the cause and the effect of the spread of education, the stimulus and the product of stupendous efforts to promote inter-communication. Tested merely as a form of industry, the saleable value of all the newspapers and journals current in 1880 was estimated at nearly twenty-two millions sterling.

In that year the number of periodical publications in the United States reported by the census enumerators was eleven thousand three hundred and fourteen. Of these nine hundred and seventy-one were daily newspapers; eight thousand six hundred and thirty-three were weekly newspapers (including eight hundred and four weekly editions of daily journals); one hundred and thirty-three were semi-weekly newspapers (of which forty-one were connected with dailies); seventy-three were tri-weeklies (including forty-one connected with dailies); forty were bi-weekly publications; one thousand one hundred and sixty-seven were monthly periodicals; one hundred and sixty were semi-monthly; two were tri-monthly; thirteen were bi-monthly; one hundred and sixteen were quarterly; and six were semi-annual periodicals.

Defining a newspaper as a publication devoted to "news, politics, and family reading," the enumerators divide the above list into eight thousand eight hundred and sixty-three newspapers, and two thousand four hundred and fifty-one periodicals. Of the latter class we find five hundred and fifty-three returned as religious; one hundred and seventy-three agricultural; two hundred and eighty-four commercial; twenty-five financial; fifty-four insurance

and railways; one hundred and eighty-nine general literature, including not only all the magazines and reviews, but also the weekly "story-papers"; one hundred and fourteen medical and surgical; forty-five law; forty-eight science and mechanics; one hundred and forty-nine temperance, Freemasons, and Oddfellows, and other organs of organisations; two hundred and forty-eight educational; seventy-two art, music, and fashions; two hundred and seventeen children's papers; and two hundred and sixty miscellaneous. There were four hundred and eighty-one illustrated papers which are included in one or other of the classes, as are also all the journals published in foreign languages.

It is very interesting to trace the comparative rate of increase in newspapers as revealed by the various censuses since 1840. Thus from 1850 to 1860 the increase was 60·37 per cent.; between 1860 and 1870, 44·93 per cent.; and between 1870 and 1880, nearly 100 per cent. The most remarkable increase was in the number of weekly newspapers.

These figures, however, do not show all the newspapers which have been started and suspended after a longer or shorter term of life. The average longevity of journals in the United States is much shorter than that of Great Britain, although above that of the Continental press. Of the vast total of American journals, there are only three hundred and seventy which have been in existence for fifty years.

There is considerable contention for the honour of being the acknowledged oldest living American newspaper. There are some four or five which trace their origin in direct line from the "fifties" of last century, but there seems to have been a temporary suspension, from one cause or another, in the case of each, except in that of the Hartford Courant. This was established in Connecticut in 1764, and has been continued without interruption or change of name until now. The Maryland Gazette was established some years earlier, viz., in 1745, but was suspended, and re-started in 1839. The Connecticut paper, therefore, appears to be the true patriarch of the American press.

Mr. Horace Greeley, himself the owner and editor of a newspaper in New York, stated in evidence before a Committee of our own House of Commons, in 1851, that fifteen thousand was the general average population of a town which started a newspaper in the Union, but that every town

of twenty thousand inhabitants would certainly have two newspapers at least. From the census of 1880, however, we find that one thousand nine hundred and seventy-one daily papers were published in only three hundred and eighty-nine towns, thus giving an average of two and a half papers to each. One of these towns was Elko, in Nevada, whose population was only seven hundred and fifty-two, and another was Tombstone, in Arizona, which last city had actually two daily papers. The town of Eureka, in California, had three dailies for a population of two thousand six hundred and thirty-nine, and the town of Red Bluff, two for a population of two thousand one hundred and six. Another Nevada town, Winnemucca, with only seven hundred and sixty-three inhabitants, had a daily paper all to itself. This is illustrative of what is claimed as a peculiar characteristic of the American press—its localisation. Every hamlet has its mouthpiece through the printing-press, and every city is independent of every other city for its daily news supply. In this fact, it is claimed, is met "the first condition of a healthy and progressive national journalism, and this it is that makes and will preserve the American press as the freest, the most self-reliant, the most loyal to home and vicinity interest in the world."

These remarks, we must explain, are those of the Census Commissioners, and do not, by any means, embody our own views. The disposition to "vicinity interest" has bred that inclination to personalities and private "spice," which we regard as the greatest defect of the American press, and as indicative rather of license than of liberty.

The figures referring to circulation are interesting. The total number of copies of daily papers printed in the United States, in 1880, was more than eleven hundred millions; and, adding to this the weeklies, monthlies, quarterlies, etc., we find a grand total of periodicals of more than two thousand millions. It is almost impossible to grasp these figures; but it will be noted that daily newspapers represent more than one half of the entire circulation of periodicals. Comparing the circulation with the population it will be found that there are enough newspapers printed every year to supply every person of a reading age with a journal at least once a week. But of course all adults even cannot read, and all persons who can read, do not.

The capital invested in newspapers in the United States, in 1880, was computed at about ten and a half millions sterling; the number of hands employed was over sixty-five thousand, and the amount paid in wages was little short of six millions sterling.

### AT TATTERSALL'S.

A CURIOUS mixture of associated ideas is called forth by the mention of Tattersall's. To one it means the chief temple of the turf, the Royal Exchange of the betting world, the Chapel Court of speculators in racing stock and in the chances of the course. But Tattersall's has many visitors and familiars who have never taken or laid the odds; whose only notion of the field is of a grassy enclosure; for whom "bar one" is foolishness, while "P.P." suggests only "practical piety." Thus, Mrs. Proudie, in all her stiff brocades—nay, the Bishop himself, even, may be seen at Tattersall's, looking out for a match-horse for the episcopal barouche, or, perhaps, for a clever, handsome cob to carry his lordship in the Park; while for those—and their name is legion—who love horses, and to ride and drive them, without much interest in the mysteries of the racing world, the name of Tattersall is a household word, and the reality itself—the great horse-selling dépôt by Albert Gate—an accustomed and frequent haunt.

There are many frequenters of Tattersall's who, like faithful Mahommedans, date from the Hegira—the departure, that is, from the old premises, which, for well nigh a century, had been the central hub of the universe of sport—the well-known "Corner," to which old turfites often recur with loving regret. Things were somehow different in the days of the old Corner: horses were stouter; races were more gamely contested, betting was more generous, and racing a noble sport rather than a commercial speculation. According to such people, all things altered for the worse when Tattersall's moved a step or two westwards. Commercial depression, failure of crops, shortness of cash, and suspension of credit—all these things have followed in doleful train since Messrs. Tattersall led the way from St. George's to Knightsbridge—little more than a quarter of a mile, you will say; but, then, Meccah is not very far from Medina, and yet what momentous consequences ensued from that trifling

pilgrimage, the end of which is not yet fully worked out.

But if some traveller who had been interned among the wilds of Africa for twenty years or so were to return, and look for Tattersall's in the once familiar spot, he would find it difficult to verify the site even where it once existed. What changes are these? the bewildered tourist would exclaim. Where is the Duke on his charger? Where is Decimus Burton's arch? The arch is there, indeed, a second glance would tell him, but set in quite a different direction from where it once stood facing the archway entrance to Hyde Park. Indeed, the whole aspect of the Corner, with its open space and green lawns, is so different from what it once was that it requires a glance at the sturdy brick wall of Buckingham Palace Gardens—a glance, too, at the hospital, which still holds its ground—to assure the wanderer that, after all, nothing very revolutionary has occurred, and that things are much as they used to be twenty years ago.

Like most of our favourite institutions, Tattersall's is rather the result of growth and accretion than of definite prearranged plan. It has broadened out, so to say, from the simple mart of horses of its founder to the present highly organised establishment. The death of the first Tattersall is recorded in the Gentleman's Magazine obituary—"20th April, 1795, at his house, at Hyde Park Corner, Mr. Tattersall, an eminent horse-dealer"—and the notice goes on to commemorate, most justly by all accounts, the kindheartedness and benevolence which had distinguished the deceased. Indeed, the portrait of Richard Tattersall still possessed by the firm, and engraved in Knight's London, shows a sensible face, with a shade of melancholy about it, while the broad, low-crowned hat, long waistcoat, and wide-flapped coat are characteristic of the period. The veteran's hand rests upon the Stud Book, as if, like his brother autocrat the great Peter, he were laying down for his descendants the policy that should govern their future efforts, and this policy has been faithfully adhered to. For while the great sales of blood-stock have nearly always been conducted under the hammer of one of the firm, yet as a rule the records of the turf will show that they have been little concerned either in running horses or betting upon them. And yet it is true that the fortunes of the house were first established by a racehorse. The celebrated Highflyer,

which was bought by Tattersall for two thousand five hundred guineas, proved so profitable on the course, and in the stud, that its possessor was able to purchase a comfortable estate in his native county. In gratitude to the noble animal, Tattersall gave the name of Highflyer Hall to the house he built for himself on the property, and the inscription, "Highflyer not to be sold," on one of the family portraits, denotes how the latter days of the grand old horse were spent in the happy ease of a country paddock.

Tattersall's sales soon became so popular, that nearly all the world was to be found at the Corner, including owners of horses, and those who wanted to hear the latest news of favourite racers. The fine gentlemen and handsome women who still live for us on the canvasses of Reynolds and Gainsborough were there, walking about in laced coats and ruffles, and in the soft tissues and Indian muslins which had replaced the stately silks and brocades of former days. It was even at an epoch when there was no Derby Day. The Suffolk baronet, Sir Charles Bunbury, had not yet scored the first win of the first Derby on Epsom course, while the lord of Knowsley was still one of the pillars of the turf, and from his pleasant racing seat at the Oaks secured that wonderful double event in racing nomenclature—the naming of the two most popular races of the year. The handsome face and curly head of the young Prince of Wales, full of life and promise, were often to be seen at Tattersall's with Colonel O'Kelly, from Clerkenwell, the owner of the great Eclipse, the wonder of all time. Astley was then in full swing, witching the world with noble horsemanship. It was a time when many things were beginning that have gone on flourishing into our own days, and when, on the other hand, many things were coming to an inevitable end.

The turf shared in the revolutionary movements of the age. From being the exclusive sport of Princes, and nobles, and squires of high degree, who raced for whips and belts, and ran matches, or now and then a sweepstakes over Newmarket Heath, racing was fast becoming popular, and with the spirit and enterprise that the new blood had introduced, betting assumed a new and increasing importance. But it was only incidentally, and outside their regular business, that Tattersall's became the centre of turf speculation. The betting that went on among the regular

frequenters of the mart attracted a numerous company of speculators, and for the sake of order and regularity a room was set aside for betting, and admission confined strictly to members, who paid a certain subscription. Presently a committee was appointed to manage the affairs of the club, as the affair had now virtually become, and although it has never been attempted to exclude any on account of social status, yet there is a tolerably strict financial supervision, and the default to pay a bet involves suspension from the privileges of the rooms, and at the same time excludes from all the rings and enclosures under the control of the Jockey Club.

It is but a short walk from Hyde Park Corner to the present Tattersall's, and all the way along one cannot help marvelling at the rapid transformation of a district which twenty years ago was rather of the lodging-house and cookshop order of architecture to a region of wealth and fashion. Even some of the old-fashioned houses that used to have cards in the windows—Apartments, or Drawing-room Floor To Let, Furnished—are now brightened up into spruce abodes of fashion; and where the scrubby laurels used to shed their leaves, are now encaustic fountains and marvellous displays of flowers, where splendid footmen bask, and coroneted carriages dash up to the gates. But the Brompton Road is still unchanged—quite a refreshing compound of ordinary jolly, vulgar existence among all this display, with its brokers' shops and green-grocers, its newsvendors and universal oilmen. You can hardly have passed by here—say from Hyde Park Corner to the Albert Hall—without wondering at the sight of the rows of quasi-palaces petting out, and the grand highway that might well be the route of princes, forking suddenly into a pair of commonplace and narrow streets, with a sharp corner between, occupied by premises of a very humble type. That corner, by the way, is now fast disappearing; the shanties which occupied the angle have either been pulled down or tumbled down of themselves, and although the destiny of the place still hangs in uncertainty, it is probable that before long the whole will disappear into space for a time, to emerge adapted to the requirements of millionaires. Now this sharp corner, we take it, was once Knightsbridge Green—a little cross-cut of a passage bears that name—a green

with a pond, and geese, and white posts and rails; once upon a time, perhaps, with the brook running across, and a bridge strong enough to have borne the knights and their destriers, as they rode up from the west country at the King's bidding.

A little morsel of that Knightsbridge Green has been preserved by the Tattersalls, and is a joy for ever within its iron railing, where carriages and cabs come sweeping round, and stand and wait at all hours. Sometimes a Duke in a big drag, with four spanking horses; sometimes Mr. and Mrs. Brown in a one-horse shay; while a couple of bookmakers from the manufacturing districts drive up in a shabby four-wheeler, with a paper of shrimps between them, at which they are munching, regardless of heads or tails. There is a goat within, nibbling at the fresh grass, and giving a rural, and at the same time a stably aspect to the scene. And there is the greyish-brown pediment of Tattersall's gateway, with a throng passing in and out, and horses champing their bits, and harness rattling. On the left is the big subscription-room, with its steps and awning, under which an excited crowd would seethe and shout on the eve of some great race. There is less excitement now—not that betting has fallen off, but it is more diffused, carried on at clubs and sporting-houses all over the country.

On a fine Monday morning, the season just fairly started, the country people up in town for Epsom, for Ascot, for Goodwood, for all the delights and pleasures of the opening summer, what pleasanter resort than Tattersall's, under the great span roof with the glazed openings, with the soft gravel under the feet, horses tramping and curvetting about, and a general sound of voices, more than a murmur, and yet not amounting to a roar; voices of every pitch and cadence, from the husky monotone of the country boniface to the aristocratic concert-pitch of Lady Vere de Vere. And while a goodly number are assembled in the hall of sales, making its roof resound with animated talk—now of the events of the last hunting season, now of what may be expected in the next—there is a general tramp, tramp, all through the stables and stalls, where all the horses that are on sale to-day may be seen and criticised by the public. Here is the good hunter, ridden on parade, and quiet in harness, that cranes his neck, and views from the corner of his eyes his unaccustomed visitors. Here is Blackstrap by Doctor, dam by Jalap, up

to fifteen stone, and has carried a lady, and Blackstrap toys carelessly with a loose hind leg, and seems to measure distance carefully as he sees his friends approach. Here they are, line upon line, and box after box, chestnuts, browns, and roans, bay geldings, and black mares, temperate and clever, good action and manners, good fencer, and fast, quiet to ride and drive, and so on through the sixteen stall stable, and along the fourteen stall stable, and getting quite bewildered among it all—a hundred and fifty horses munching their hay and corn, and all indifferent to the change of masters that the next few hours may bring.

Right in the centre of the great hall is the palladium of the establishment, without which it would not be Tattersall's at all, and would necessarily come to grief, and that is a rather pretty little temple of classic model, with a bust of the once Prince of Wales, the future Adonis, on the top; and within the well-known effigy of a fox that has occupied the same position so long as the memory of man can testify. All round is a light, handsome gallery, occupied by carriages of every description sent here for sale; while one side of the area below is fenced off, and a corner is occupied by a substantial pulpit, with a sounding-board overhead.

It is some way past eleven o'clock, and the serious feeling of the moment is increased as you see an attendant horse-keeper flecking the last specks of dust from the pulpit-desk, while a clerk carefully arranges a book and papers, for all the world as in a Scotch church just before the minister makes his appearance. And before the great clock in the hall shows the half-hour, a mysterious whisper has passed among all the attendants—quiet-looking men in blue cricketing caps, with here and there one with a whip, used for cracking purposes only, like the little guns you see on board-ship for firing salutes. But one says to the other, "Is it lock up, yet?" And the other replies cautiously: "Not yet."

But the word is passed before long, "Lock up," and from every side resounds the slamming of doors, and turning of keys, while those who have been taking a last lingering look at their fancies hasten forth to join the rest of the crowd in the hall. One lively youth has lingered too long and been locked in, and is helped out through a window. And while our attention is engrossed by this little episode, we find



that the pulpit is now occupied, and that business has commenced. "Why, they've got the two-year-old out to-day," observes a wheezy voice close by, for it is not the well-known form of the chief of the firm that meets the eye, but the fresh, youthful face of the latest of the Tattersalls; the Tattersall of the future he may be called, who, in due course, may see out another generation of sportsmen from the present; who may see the old faces fade away, and many a new one come to the front. "Going, going, gone!" There is quite a melancholy appropriateness about the words, as you look round and think what changes another twenty years will make in the composition of the throng.

But up and down goes a horse, walking, or rather dancing, upon its hind legs; the biddings go on, a knowing-looking dealer plunges under the rails, and makes a hasty survey of the animal's mouth in spite of its evident objection to the process. To the outside spectator there is always a degree of mystery about the auctioneer. How does he pick up the bids that are conveyed by a wink, perhaps, or an imperceptible movement of the chin, by some sign anyhow which the keenest attention of the observer fails to detect. But young Mr. Richard seems to take to it all as naturally as possible. The greatest of the auctioneers rarely indulge in eloquence. A country practitioner will expend as much fire about an old frying-pan as Tattersall would about a two thousand guinea yearling; but there is a manner that is more eloquent than words, and there is a kind of generalship in the business that comes out on great occasions.

But here everything is sharp and decisive; the hammer comes down sharply upon the last bidding. "Another turn," to the groom, who hangs on to the halter, and flies up and down the track, while bystanders recede gracefully from the horse's heels. "A hundred and fifty—fifty-five—to be sold; and sixty—against you—sixty-five—any advance—going," bang! And, by this time, another animal is prancing along towards the rostrum, when the process of extracting the last bid and knocking down, metaphorically, the horse, is gone through with the same expedition. Meantime, from the gallery above, the number of the lot has been shown on a large placard, dealers mark off the prices with stumpy pencils, and amateurs criticise the appearance and action of the animal under the hammer.

And thus the sale goes on, hour after hour; and before nightfall some fifteen or twenty thousand pounds' worth of horseflesh will have changed owners, and tomorrow they will march away in strings to their new quarters—some back to the shires to summer pastures and lightsome frolics, others to carry youth and beauty in the parks, others again as coach-horses to trundle stately old dowagers hither and thither; while here and there one—a good fencer and fast—having seen its best days, will be consigned to the shafts of a rattling hansom, and so end its career upon the arid stones of this London wilderness.

#### TO A THRUSH.

How I do envy thee, thou small brown bird,  
That sittest on the slowly budding spray  
Of yonder tree, and all the pale spring day  
Pourest thy song abroad, till swift upstirred  
The other birds sing forth their merry song.  
Singing unheeding or of pain or wrong,  
I hear thee trilling through the sweet moist air!  
How free thy music; how it, welling out,  
Makes the world vocal: what hast thou with  
doubt?

What knowest thou of all we mortals bear?  
Ah, little dost thou reck of sin or pain;  
Nor dost thou know that frost must come again!

Oh, I am weighted with a world of care;  
I cannot sing like thee, mute am I sure!  
I feel all that thou say'st, but must endure  
In silence, for I may not take my share  
In that vast stream of praise that is outpoured  
When sweet spring rises up to greet her Lord.

Teach me thy secret, happy bird, I wait  
Expectantly to listen for the charm,  
That keeps thee ignorant of sin and harm,  
And those fierce joys that make the sufferer great,  
That crown him in the presence of the earth,  
That hail him conqueror o'er the ills of birth.

What, wilt thou not confide in me to-night?  
See how the wan moon creeps above the fir,  
While in the topmost boughs a sad song stirs,  
Too sad, too sweet, to greet her beauty bright.  
Then art thou silent as the night glides by,  
Drawing her garments o'er the saffron sky.

I cannot sing, for oh! my heart is sore;  
Thou hast no heart, dear bird, so thou can'st sing,  
Thou hast no past, no future that may bring  
Some deadly dart to pierce thee to the core;  
Thou livest in the present's fair blue sky,  
That is thy secret shared by none, save I.

#### CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

##### DORSET.

AN isolated, half-amphibious population long inhabited the coast of Dorset, fishermen who fished mostly for kegs of spirits and cases of lace and tobacco. The sandbanks and intricate channels of Poole Harbour—its inlets and creeks bordered by a wild and desolate country—gave the district roundabout a pre-eminent position

in the annals of smuggling. Here was effected the crowning exploit, perhaps, of the comrades of Will Watch of ballad fame, when they broke open the custom-house of Poole and rescued a comrade and his forfeited chests of tea. In this exploit the men of Poole were assisted by the smugglers of Sussex; the famous Hawk-hurst gang marched across Hampshire to join in the enterprise, and many of both counties afterwards paid the penalty, and were hung in chains up and down the country roads.

In earlier times, before a war of tariffs began, a more legitimate trade enriched the burghers of Poole. With Rouen and the Seine a brisk commerce had been carried on from the earliest times, and Wareham, higher up the estuary, shared in the prosperity it brought. In the mouth of the harbour—or gulf, it might more properly be called—of Poole, lies Branksea Island, with an Elizabethan castle built to protect the port when Spaniards were cruising about the narrow seas, and the island, with its rich deposits of potter's and other clays, became the scene of a modern romance, when Colonel Waugh essayed to turn its clays into gold, and flourished for a time as a fairy prince of finance.

The southern shore of the estuary is formed by the great island or peninsula of Purbeck, with its ancient population of quarrymen. A chain of hills cuts off an isolated tract to the south, and in the centre of this range, the ancient Corfe Gate, where the old highway winds through a gap among the hills, stands the once famous fortress of Corfe Castle.

A sinister history has this ancient castle, a royal seat of the West Saxon kings, whose earliest written record is in the Saxon Chronicle under the year 978. In this year King Edward was slain at eventide at Corfe Gate. Ancient as is the record, the story with this tragic ending might form the groundwork of a modern romance.

Among the hills of Devon lived a fair, golden-haired girl, Elfrida, the daughter of Ordgar, the Earl of that ilk. She was the beauty of the country round—fair as an angel, with the ambition and the passions of another kind of being. King Edgar heard a report of her beauty, and sent a favourite thane, Athelwold, to judge if the damsel was indeed so fair as fame had painted her. Athelwold, on first sight of Elfrida, was fairly enthralled by her charms; he was determined

to win her for himself, and sent to his King a slighting report of her person. In the meantime, Athelwold's wooing speeded well. The damsel had seen no better or nobler suitor, and so married him, looking forward to leaving the wilds of Devon for the gayer, brighter scenes at the King's court, which her husband's position should open to her. But great was the young bride's disgust when she found that her husband kept her secluded in the country, and refused to take her to the King's court. Envious tongues soon retailed to her the real motive of the seclusion in which she was kept. She found means to evade the watch her husband had set upon her, and presented herself before the King in all the pride of her youth and beauty.

King Edgar, impassioned at the sight, eagerly demanded the name and quality of the beautiful creature. The truth was soon told, and the unfaithfulness of Athelwold was revealed. No stronger tie could bind men together than that of king and thegn; companions in hall and in battle, one to lead, the other to follow or die in fellowship; and to betray his lord was a crime that only death could expiate in an unworthy thegn. People did not ask how Athelwold died; enough that the end came quickly, and Elfrida was a widow, soon in royal robes to share the throne of the King of the Angles. Presently a son was born to the unhallowed nuptials, and with that the woman's ambition began to stir again. It troubled her to think that not her boy, the lovely child Ethelred, but the King's eldest son, Edward, of an earlier marriage, would rule at her husband's death. When her boy was six years old the King died, and Edward, who was only twelve, succeeded to the throne of England. Elfrida full of bitterness retired with her boy to the royal seat of Corfe Gate.

Some four years after the young King was at Wareham, and hunting through all the country round about. One evening the chase had led him far, and he had out-riden all his attendants, when he came to a pleasant house among the hills, which he recognised as the dwelling of his step-mother and of the little brother whom he dearly loved. The whole household was in commotion at the appearance of the King. Elfrida came forward to welcome him, bringing with her the special cup with which it was the custom to welcome the coming as well as to speed the parting guest. As he stooped to drink, the idea flashed upon the fateful Queen that here

was the opportunity for which she had long waited, and with a dagger she struck her guest to the heart. The King galloped off, but fell from his saddle, and was dragged by his golden stirrup till life was gone. It is said that when Elfrida brought the news to her son that his brother was dead, and he now King of England, the boy wailed so bitterly the loss of his brother that the Queen in her rage seized a wax-taper from the altar of her chapel, and belaboured him with it so lustily that he was left senseless on the ground.

Edward's body, hidden in a humble cottage, was afterwards buried in great pomp at Shaftesbury, and by the popular voice he was recognised as saint and martyr, and the parish church of Corfe, as well as other ancient Saxon churches, was dedicated to his honour. The Queen, pursued by general execration, hid her beauty and her crimes within the walls of a nunnery, and spent the rest of her life in penance.

The history of the Norman castle that was built soon after the Conquest on the site of the Saxon villa, is of the same gloomy order. It was used chiefly as a state prison—a living tomb for the subjects of royal suspicion. Here was prisoner for a time Robert of Normandy, a captive in the hands of his brother. A century later, Eleanor, the Damsel of Bretagne, the sister of Prince Arthur, was here immured by her uncle John. A true ogre's castle this, with imprisoned damsels pining for a deliverer who never came; with dungeons dark and foul, where unhappy captive knights were left to die of slow starvation. Twenty-two knights captured at Mirabeau with Arthur and Eleanor were, according to the chronicles, starved to death at Corfe, and the recent historian of the castle, Mr. Thomas Bond, has drawn strong confirmation of this terrible story in the King's written instructions to his constable, who, in regard to these prisoners, was to follow the verbal directions of the King's messengers. Here, too, was hidden the King's treasure, and the royal crown, and jewels, which he was presently to lay down with his life among the fens of Lincolnshire.

Here, too, was enacted one of the strangest and most gloomy pageants of which we have any record. King Edward the Second had been held a prisoner here for a time before his murder at Berkeley Castle, and in the mystery that surrounded the King's death, it was whispered that he was not really dead, but kept still in close captivity at Corfe. The late King's brother,

Edmund, Earl of Kent, heard the rumour, and dissatisfied with the rule of Queen Isabel and her favourite, Mortimer, would gladly have believed the rumour true. And this gave occasion to a plot which was soon prepared for his destruction.

In order to give semblance to the report of the King's captivity, shows and maskings were got up, "with dancing upon the towers and walls of the castle, which being perceived by the people of the country, it was thought there was some great King residing in the fortress, for whom these shows were provided." Upon hearing of this, the Earl proceeded to the neighbourhood, and finding full confirmation of these things, among the inhabitants round about, he sent a certain friar to find out the truth. The friar, after many pretended difficulties, gained admittance to the castle, and was brought into the great hall, where he was shown "a person sitting royally at supper, who with great majesty counterfeited the King." Upon the report of his emissary, the Earl himself rode to the castle, and demanded an interview with his brother, the King. The constable of the castle, not denying that the King was there, refused to permit an interview, but offered to take charge of a letter. The Earl fell blindly into the trap so cunningly laid, and wrote a letter to the supposed King, which was at once shown to the Queen and the young King. Thereupon the Earl was arraigned before the Parliament at Winchester, when his own letter was produced. He was condemned of high treason and beheaded at Winchester before the castle gate, and it is said that so strong was the feeling in his favour that no one could be found to perform the office of executioner, and the Earl waited at the castle gate from noon till nearly night, when some poor wretch was found to do the office.

All this and many other interesting particulars of the estate of a royal castle in the olden time will be found in Mr. Bond's recent and excellent history. But here there is only space to glance briefly at the subsequent chronicles of the castle, which is still a noble ruin, although it suffered much from the effects of gunpowder used to demolish it at the end of the Civil Wars of the seventeenth century.

The castle remained in royal hands, with its Constable generally a nobleman of distinction, till Henry the Seventh granted it to his mother, the famous Countess of Richmond and Derby. Years after her death King Henry the Eighth gave the

castle to his natural son, Henry Duke of Richmond, who did not long survive the gift. Nor was the next grantee, the Duke of Somerset, in the following reign, more fortunate, who soon fell beneath the headman's axe. But if there was an evil spell upon the castle, it was broken by Elizabeth, who, mindful, perhaps, that where money passes, the ill-luck of a gift is avoided, sold the whole estate to her favourite, Sir Christopher Hatton, the dancing Lord Keeper; but as he had bought more estates than he could pay for, the castle was sold again, first to the Cokes and then to Sir John Bankes, Chief Justice, in whose descendants it still remains. Lady Bankes made a famous defence of the castle for the King in the Civil Wars, and after that the fortifications were demolished by gunpowder, as has already been told.

Among the ruins of the Norman walls still exist the remains of a much earlier building, perhaps the very chapel of St. Aldhelm, which witnessed the orisons of the perfidious Saxon Queen. St. Aldhelm, it may be noted, was the first bishop of the see, which was formerly placed at Sherborne, and afterwards became the see of Salisbury; and he has given his name to the headland which, by a very easy transition, has come to be more generally known as St. Alban's.

At Swanage, too, there is an ancient church, with a tower of still greater antiquity. Indeed, the whole district of Purbeck has an old-world flavour about it; and the customs and laws of its quarriers, whose place of meeting is the green of Corfe Castle, are full of interest as survivals of earlier days.

Following the coast, Lulworth Cove is the next opening on the iron-bound coast, with its castle of the sixteenth and later centuries overlooking the sea, long the seat of the ancient Catholic family of Weld; and there is little to break the long line of cliffs till we come to Weymouth, with its long esplanade and the memory of the more recent royalties who brought the place into fashion.

As for the ancient records of Weymouth we may consult Coker, whose ancient survey throws some light upon the matter. Coker does not blame the men of Weymouth for helping their King Edward the Third "with fifteen ships and two hundred and sixty-three mariners to besiege Callice," as the French, "both then and many times since have essayed to burn their town and destroy the inhabitants." Coker also

reports "these townes," Weymouth and Melcombe Regis, that are separated by the harbour, and were long at feud and enmity, "now gaine well by traffique with Newfoundland, where they have eighty sayle of ships and barks; as also a nearer cutt with France, opposite to them, whence they return laden with wines, cloath, and divers other useful commodities." But Weymouth, having lost the Newfoundland trade, while the French traffic had also declined, had sunk to a mere fishing-town, when it was taken up by royalty in 1789. Some of its French trade it has recovered through the steamers of the Great Western Railway; and it is also the depot of a considerable trade with Jersey in early fruits and vegetables, and is often busy enough in the new-potato season, when steamers are plying to and fro, freighted with innumerable small barrels, which visit in turn, perhaps, all the great vegetable markets of the country.

From Weymouth the Isle of Portland, with its quarries and convicts, stretches far out into the sea, almost connected with the main land by that wonderful natural causeway of loose pebbles known as Chesil Bank, which continues along the coast like a barrier-reef for ten miles or so, enclosing a strip of salt water that is always smooth and untroubled. And all along the coast there is no opening or shelter till we come to Bridport, a town that owes its popularity to the manufacture of nets and cordage, for which it was famous even in the days of Henry the Eighth, who ordered that all the tackling for his ships should be there purchased. Just on the borders of Devonshire we come to another ancient port, almost unique among harbours, as it is formed by no river or tidal-creek, but has for its only protection a natural breakwater—originally of loose cobbles or round stones, but now strengthened by art, and forming a solid mass of masonry. The town clusters along the sides of a romantic combe, the first of the rugged little west-country coast towns, the homes of the brave adventurous seamen who explored a new world under Raleigh, or fought the Spaniards under Hawkins and Drake, or roved and plundered among the islands of the Spanish Main. Off the coast just here began the running fight with the Spanish Armada, and the descendants of the men who had fought for their Queen against Pope and Spaniard banded themselves together half a century later to defend their town against King Charles. In the long and desperate

siege of Lyme the Royalists were at last beaten off.

There were many yet living who had taken part in the defence of their town, to welcome the little flotilla that found shelter within the cobb, the three ships of the Duke of Monmouth which had been nineteen days at sea from Flushing, having escaped the King's fleet and the perils of a stormy voyage. The Duke set up his standard in the little market-place of Lyme, and the peasantry and townsfolk flocked to it from far and near once more to fight against Popery and prelacy, and the Duke presently marched on towards fatal Sedgemoor with near four thousand men. Soon followed the bloody assize, and the gallows was erected at Lyme, and a terrible execution followed. Among the victims was William Hewbury of London, Lieutenant of Foot, the son of an eminent Turkey merchant of the city, and the grandson of one Mr. Kyffin, of an eminent Nonconformist family. His brother Benjamin, who had also joined the Duke, was executed at Taunton. Their sister Hannah strove to save them by an appeal to the King's mercy. Lord Churchill, the future Duke of Marlborough, exerted himself to obtain her admission to the Royal presence, but gave her no hope of success. "That marble," he said, pointing to one of the ornaments of the royal antechamber, "is as capable of feeling as the King's heart."

Soon, however, the King's heart was wrung by his own misfortunes, and in his efforts to conciliate the citizens of London, he was advised to secure the influence of Mr. Kyffin as one of the most respected citizens and the most influential among the dissenting sects. Mr. Kyffin sadly replied to the King's condescending words that he had long since withdrawn from worldly affairs; and, moreover, he continued in a voice broken with emotion, "the death of my grandsons gave a wound to my heart which is still bleeding, and will never close but in the grave." The King, it is said, turned pale—livid, we may fancy—as when the mud-stained messenger brought the news of the landing at Torbay, and he seemed at once to realise how hopeless were his efforts.

Yet another episode connected with Monmouth's rebellion may be told in this connection, although the scene is on the extreme border of the county towards Hampshire. Here, at Shags Heath, in a wood surrounded by a wild and desolate country, Monmouth, a fugitive from the

field of Sedgemoor, hid himself from the soldiers who had spread themselves over the country in his pursuit. A farmer, who had seen the fugitive enter the enclosure, gave information to the soldiers, and the country-people afterwards loved to tell how from that time nothing ever prospered with the informer, who sank with his family into the rank of paupers. And here the spoilt child of the Court, the petted cavalier of the rank and beauty of the period, was found grovelling in the mud of a tangled ditch, while the soldier who captured him and who had seen him at the head of his regiment in former days, burst into tears at the sight, and besought his forgiveness.

Thus far our chronicle has been chiefly concerned with the country about the sea-coast, and perhaps the chief interest of the county is centred there, as the open downs of Dorset, with their scanty population, have not hitherto supplied much interesting material for the local historian. Chief over the chalk country is Dorchester, an interesting little town, and very ancient settlement. The shaded walks that border the town are on the lines of the old Roman walls, and all its inhabitants twice told might be contained in the amphitheatre, hewn out of the hill-side, where once gladiators may have fought, "butchered to make a Roman holiday." An English holiday of equally barbarous character was afforded early in the last century by the burning of one Mary Channing, just previously executed for the murder of her husband, a crime then regarded in the light of petty treason, and as worthy to be marked with extreme punishment. Some ten thousand beholders are said to have found room to witness the gruesome sight from the sloping banks. The ancient British city probably had its site a mile to the south-west of the present town, where is Maiden Castle—tallest and strongest of all the maidens scattered up and down the land—an enormous earthwork, surrounded by treble ditches and ramparts of prodigious size and depth. This was probably the Dinas-fawr, or big fortress, of the Britons, while the Romans modified the name, with less disguise than their wont, to Durnovaria.

And a town of some kind has here clung to existence with great tenacity ever since those old-world times. In Domesday it is recorded that a hundred houses lay waste, long ago demolished by the Danes. And fire has done its work many times since to destroy any relics of the past, although

Roman coins are often picked up in the neighbourhood and are called Dorn-pennies. Old Icknield Way, too, passes through Dorchester, entering the town by the north side of St. Peter's, by Trinity Church, and pursuing its course along the ridge to the westward. It may often be traced where all other track is lost by the boundaries of hundreds and parishes, and worthy Dr. Stakely followed it a century or more ago from Caistor, in Norfolk, and through all the intervening counties right into Dorset.

As for the more modern Roman roads their trace is followed almost exactly by the present highways, which correspond with the cardinal points of the compass. Following that to the northwards, we come to Cerne Abbas—whose ancient abbey has left some small but interesting remains—where Margaret of Anjou rested for a night on her way to defeat and ruin at Tewkesbury. Above the town rises a steep chalk-hill, crowned by an entrenchment, on the declivity of which is, or was, a gigantic figure cut out of the turf, after the White Horse example, representing a man holding a club. Tradition makes this commemorate the destruction of a giant, who, having wasted Blackmore Vale, and gorged himself with slaughtered sheep, here disposed himself for an after-dinner nap, and was, like Gulliver, pinioned to the earth, and finally put to death by the enraged peasants, who traced his dimensions on the sod for the information of posterity.

Farther to the north is Sherborne, with its fine minster church, where once a bishop had his seat; and Sherborne Lodge, near the site of the ancient castle—the castle built by Stephen, and demolished by Cromwell. It was one of the last of the strongholds that held out for the King in the west country, and when Fairfax finally compelled it to surrender, a numerous company of officers were captured and a quantity of warlike stores. The earlier history of the castle and domain is not without interest. Osmond, Earl of Dorset and Lord of Sherborne, one of the Conqueror's favourite chiefs, repenting his deeds of rapine and bloodshed, embraced a religious life, and became Bishop of Sarum. He endowed the see with the castle and estate of Sherborne, annexing to the gift a curse, both in this world and in the next, upon any who should take them from the Church. The Crown, however, got hold of the domain, and granted it to various nobles, with the curse annexed, it

seems, for they all came to a bad end. In the reign of Elizabeth, it was granted to Sir Walter Raleigh, who built the central portion of the lodge, but to whom it brought the customary bad luck. When Raleigh was attainted the estate fell to the Crown, although Raleigh had a son, for whom his mother pleaded in vain. "I maun hae it for Carr," was the King's invariable reply, meaning for his worthless favourite. But Prince Henry interfered, and procured a grant to himself, intending, it is said, to transfer it to the Raleigh family. And here again the curse was seen at work, for Henry died soon after, an event fraught with fateful issues to the house of Stuart. Carr got the estate, at last, and we know what became of him. On his attainder the estate was begged by Sir John Digby, who broke the charm by paying a round sum to Prince Charles for secure possession. Young Carew Raleigh had made several attempts to move the King in his favour. Once he was introduced at court, when James roughly told him: "Begone! the lad is the ghost of his father!" When Charles the First came to the throne it was thought that he would reinstate young Raleigh, but there was that retaining fee in the way which it was not convenient to refund, and so the youth was compelled to assign his rights for an annuity of four hundred a year. All which history shows how dangerous it is to receive presents of castles and lands without full knowledge of the disabilities attaching to them, in the way of unexpired curses and unsatisfied ghosts.

Attached to the cathedral of Sherborne is a fine old grammar-school, and a hospital still more ancient, dedicated to St. Augustine, for poor old men and women. The old bedesmen here were the last in this country to keep up the remembrance of the great old heathen festival of Midsummer, watching all night on St. John's Eve, while a garland was hung up on the door as an offering to the presiding deity.

It may be noticed how many of these minster towns there are in the county, generally with a noble church or the remains of one, suggesting that perhaps the church was built without any reference to the size of the settlement about it; although the sight of grand old churches in the midst of a sparse and decreasing population has led many to believe in the existence of a large agricultural population which has now vanished from the soil.

Conspicuous among the minster towns is Wimborne, whose fine old church is remarkable for its arrangement of a central tower, with a single western tower. Here lies Ethelred, the unready king, whom we have seen beaten by his mother with a wax-candle at Corfe Castle. Here is a fine monument in Purbeck marble, with alabaster effigies of John Beaufort, the grandson of old Gaunt, and his wife, the parents of Margaret of Richmond, the clever mother of Henry the Seventh. John Beaufort was constable of Corfe Castle, and lived there, no doubt, in some state, till he was carried to his last rest at Wimborne.

From Wimborne, a pleasant way by the river Stour leads to Blandford Forum, where mediæval memories are exchanged for a comparatively modern aspect that reminds one somehow of Marylebone. The church is Grecian, the houses are of the Hanoverian type; all is briak, clean, and modern. The high-street ends in a green and pleasant park, and when you are told that the park is called Bryanstone, and that the proprietor is Lord Portman, the metropolitan suggestions seem accounted for and intensified by the familiar names.

If you ask the reason of all this newness, the answer is, the great fire of 1731, when all houses were burnt except forty, and as this was the fifth great fire within a couple of centuries, there is little wonder at the scanty crop of antiquities. Fire seems to be the common and remorseless enemy of all the towns in Dorset. Thatched roofs and scarcity of water-supply may account for the destructiveness of these formerly frequent fires, but there is still an element of unaccountableness in the matter which we must leave for others to explain.

Following rail and highway, Sturminster indicates the higher course of the river with some scattered ruins of a small castle that has left no mark in history, while another road, curiously winding, leads to Shaftesbury, one of the most notable of hill-towns, occupying the crest of a chalk-ridge—a favourite position for an ancient British town, but disliked by the Saxon race, who prefer for their habitations a river-valley. Thus there is a good deal of likelihood about its ancient history, and if Julius Cæsar were not a former inhabitant, it is highly probable that some of his successors visited it. So that when King Alfred rebuilt it, after devastation by the Danes, the town had already a history of its own. But ill situated for a commercial town, Shaftesbury, which had three mints

in the reign of Edward the Confessor, and twelve churches at the Domesday Survey, dwindled considerably when its monastery was suppressed and its ancient hospitals turned to secular uses.

With this we cross a somewhat wild and rolling country to Cranborne, that gave its name to the ancient chase, which has left some pleasant patches of woodland scenery. And here we are almost within reach of the New Forest, and of a district already explored.

## A VERY ORDINARY STORY.

### CHAPTER I.

THE day was drawing to a close; it had been a bright afternoon, with sudden gusts of wind which had blown the March dust with a fierce purifying breath up and down the London streets. It had failed, however, to improve the atmosphere upon the Underground Railway, through which a crowd of busy folk was hurrying westward. The first and second class carriages were full, but the third-class were overflowing—sixteen persons being jammed into a compartment intended to hold ten, none of the ten being supplied with a very liberal allowance of space to start with. The inconvenience and crowding were further increased by the fact that most of the travellers carried packages in their hands or under their arms; the workmen had their bags of tools, a couple of errand-boys had baskets of cumbrous and inconvenient shape; and one man had a long piece of metal tubing, which declined altogether to accommodate itself to the exigencies of the situation. The marvel as to how the passengers had ever stowed themselves away faded into insignificance before the puzzling question—how they were to get out at their respective stations, unless they had adopted the precaution of arranging themselves in the right order for descending. At every stoppage there was a considerable amount of scuffling and pushing, all carried on in a good-tempered, although hurried fashion. The conduct of most of the passengers was characterised by an easy amiability and eagerness to help one another. It is astonishing with what patience people will bear the serious inconveniences which occur daily, whilst they resent fiercely those occasional ones which are comparatively trifling.

The one exception to the general good-humour was to be found in a workman who was half asleep during the first



part of the journey, but awoke just as the train rushed out of the tunnel into the open air by the Edgware Road station.

"Now what I say is," he remarked with an emphasis in astounding contrast with his previous listless disregard of all external circumstance—"Now what I say is they are all a set of confounded fools!"

The remark was addressed to no one in particular, and no one seemed inclined to answer it; the speaker therefore repeated the assertion with redoubled vigour.

The compartment was now comparatively empty, that is to say, it only contained the number of passengers for whose accommodation it had been built, and the speaker had, therefore, room to sway his body forwards in a half-stupid, half-pugnacious way, as if seeking for an opponent. With the cunning of a clouded intellect he fixed upon the only fellow-traveller who could really be annoyed by his attentions. A slim, pale girl, nearly opposite to him, coloured up suddenly as he paused in his half-tipsy survey of the carriage and addressed her solemnly:

"I should be very glad, miss, to hear your opinion on politics. In my 'pinion they are all confounded fools. What do you say? You've got a sensible face."

The girl did not answer for a moment, and then muttered something which sounded like "I don't know."

"Don't know," repeated the man with indignant emphasis. "An Englishwoman, and don't know! I know, I can tell you, and what I say is, that the rich ought to be made to pay. They lead easy lives—they do—with their wines and fish-dinners; but fish don't keep their hair from turning white—that it don't." Then, suddenly recovering himself, he dropped his maudlin tone and resumed his inquisitorial one. "Now, what's your view, miss?"

A young man, broad shouldered and hard featured, who had been intent upon his book during the greater part of the journey, looked up suddenly and took in the whole scene at a glance.

"You are too hot there," he said to the girl, rising from his seat near the window, and imperiously motioning her to occupy it. "You'll get a nice breeze if you sit here. Now then, mate," he went on, as he took his place opposite the eager politician, "where's the use of expecting ladies to talk about public affairs? I am ready enough for a chat with you."

His voice had that mixture of good-humour and firmness which pierces through

the mists even of combined drink and stupidity.

"I was saying they were a lot of confounded fools," was the answer, given, however, in a less aggressive tone of voice; "and I should like to know who will contradict me."

No one did contradict him, and the train coming to a standstill he followed a large number of his fellow-passengers out of the carriage, pausing, however, on the platform to say "No offence meant," with a certain vague sense that he owed an apology somewhere.

"I am afraid he frightened you," said the young man, closing his book, and speaking more gently than one would have expected from his hard face and rough dress. "It is a good plan to have a book with you, and then you don't have to pay attention to every fool who wants to talk to you or quarrel with you."

"I do very often read," said the girl shyly, "but I am too tired to-day."

She spoke as if stating a simple fact, but without a tinge of discontent in her voice. Under her shabby black hat her face looked pale and her eyes weary. She was very young still, and her attitude had the simple pathos of an over-tired child. Something of the contrast between his strength and her weakness smote the man with a sudden sense of injustice.

"You will have a quiet time when you get home," he said, with the air of one uttering a command rather than asking a question.

"Oh yes, if aunt does not want me," she replied.

He took up the book and began to read, then closed it with a sudden resolution.

"You'll think me one of the fools I mentioned just now, who must go on talking; but you ought not to sit with that window open just in your face; it is enough to give you a cold."

"Thank you," she said meekly, as she shut it. "I forgot all about it."

He did not speak again, but he opened the door for her when she rose up at the next station, and he watched her until she was lost in the crowd making its way up the steps into the open air.

#### CHAPTER II.

POOR little Mary Brown had her share of real commonplace troubles. A mantlemaker in a large house in the City has the privilege of suffering as keenly as a princess of the blood royal—a fact it seems hardly

worth while to mention, but yet one which in an ordinary story must not be forgotten. There was little that was stimulating or beautiful in her life. She hurried every day from a dreary home in a dreary street to a large, brilliantly-lighted, unventilated work-room, and the little daily tokens and touches of tenderness and sympathy which lend brightness to many such lives were absolutely wanting in her experience.

Something of her pathetic soul-hunger looked out of her grey eyes, but no vestige of it found expression in words, for she had never recognised the exceptional joylessness of her lot, or realised the necessity for its improvement. Her great enjoyment, the reading of romances, was an unconscious effort to satisfy her yearnings after something fuller and brighter than would be afforded by the daily round of her existence, and if her ideal world was but a poor, vulgar, pretentious show, she was yet much happier for her possession of it.

She was deep in her enjoyment of a novel one evening, about a week after the date of the trifling event just recorded. It had been a soaking wet day, and a disagreeable steam of damp clothes arose from the overcrowded carriage, but she did not heed it. She was quite absorbed, and noticed nothing until a voice at her side brought her back to the realities of life.

"Ah! You're taking my advice and reading, I see," said her neighbour.

She looked up in a startled way, and saw the smiling face of her acquaintance of the preceding week.

"Good-evening," he went on, nodding with much energy. "You have not forgotten me, have you?"

Mary shook her head, and then looked longingly at her story.

"You ain't going to follow my advice too closely, are you, and shut me up?" he asked again, still with a smile on his face. "I waited for this train because you travelled by it last week, and I wanted to know if you'd met our political friend again."

Mary smiled at the reminiscence.

No, she hadn't seen him.

"Well, I won't keep you from your book. I see your heart is in it," he said good-naturedly, and he peeped over her shoulder as he spoke to see what was engrossing her attention. His voice changed as he read, and he went on: "Now tell me, do you really like that stuff?"

Mary turned a pair of startled eyes upon him.

"It is beautiful!" she said. "At least, some parts."

"If the writing is like the drawing," he went on, outlining with contemptuous finger the form of a very slim young gentleman who was slipping off a grassy bank, "the people in the story can't be much like human beings."

"Oh, but they're lords and ladies," said Mary naively.

"Lords and ladies!" and he laughed, not scornfully, but with a quiet amusement which annoyed her considerably. "Ain't they human beings? Do you think they are

"Anthropophagi, and men whose heads  
Do grow beneath their shoulders."

"I don't understand long words," she replied, a little petulantly; "but they are beautifully dressed, and live in very grand houses."

"Now, do you think a lord is anything like that creature?" he asked, with some emphasis, as he fixed his finger on the obnoxious drawing. "Why, bless your soul, I had a talk with a lord once, and he was no more like this than you are."

Mary looked at the picture, put it on one side, and settled herself for a comfortable talk. Here was an opportunity not to be lost.

"Did you really?" she asked. "Do tell me about it."

"Why, I was sent down to a big place once—Castle Bone, it is called; Lord Norwich's place—to look after a machine that had broken down. He had a fancy for lighting his house by electricity, and as his engine was always out of order, I took it in hand."

"Was it a grand place?"

"Not as big as Windsor Castle, but big enough."

"With splendid pictures?"

"There were lots of pictures, but not half such good ones as you and I can see any day at the National Gallery."

Mary put aside any allusion to the possibilities of her own life, being interested only in this higher order of beings with whom she had now a chance of something like personal acquaintance.

"Did you see the lord—Lord Norwich?" she asked eagerly.

"Oh yes, several times." If he smiled at her eagerness, he did not do it unkindly. "He was a little, stout man, in a grey suit and a white hat, with rather a red face."

Mary sighed heavily and clutched her precious story more closely; her ideal was

not to be lightly parted with, when the real seemed to offer so little that was attractive.

"Did he speak to you?" she asked, after an interval of silence.

"Oh yes; he came down to the engine-room one day, and said, 'I hope you are not wasteful of the oil; because, by the time I have paid for its carriage, it costs me nearly sevenpence a gallon!'"

His eyes twinkled with fun as he told the story. Perhaps he had gone through a private experience of disillusion upon this very subject, and the memory of this lent extra piquancy to his enjoyment of Mary's disappointment.

His listener's face fell; it is no light matter to lose one's ideal, even if one's ideal be so poor a thing as the material magnificence of a peer of the realm.

"He was a middle-aged man, I suppose," she said after a little; "rather old, perhaps," and she brightened up at the notion—age might dim the glories of high birth and wealth. "Had he any daughters?"

"One—Lady Gertrude."

"Oh, did you ever see her?"

"I met her one day as I was going back to my lodgings in the village; it was a wet evening, like to-night."

"Was she walking? How was she dressed?"

"She had on a cloak just like yours;" Mary looked down at her shabby waterproof, considerably dismayed at a comparison which would have provoked Lady Gertrude's maid to unspeakable indignation; "and she was carrying a pudding-basin in her hand."

"A pudding-basin!" faltered Mary. "What was she doing with a basin?"

"She had been to see some old women and taken them some broth or some jelly, and just as I met her her umbrella blew inside out, and I picked it up for her and set it straight."

"Did she say anything?"

"Well, she couldn't exactly help saying 'Thank you,' but she did say something more. She went on: 'I think you must be Mr. Bates. Old Mary Layton has told me how kind you have been in mending her boiler.'"

"Was she beautiful?" asked the eager little soul, to whom the details of Lady Gertrude's speech seemed singularly commonplace and inappropriate.

"Pretty well," was the disappointing answer; "she had a nice gentle smile, but she was not half as pretty as——" Here he paused, and then filled up his speech

with the lame conclusion, "a good many other folk."

"Dear me—dear me!" said Mary regretfully. "I always thought——"

"I know what you thought—you thought Earls and Dukes and grand ladies were different from ordinary people, but they are just the same, and why shouldn't they be, after all?"

She did not answer the question, although she felt sure she could give many excellent reasons. They had been talking in the tone which, without assuming the mystery of a whisper, yet shuts out anything like unintentional participation in their talk on the part of the bystanders. An old woman, however, who had been listening intently, suddenly exclaimed:

"Earls and Dukes and Lady Gertrude! A Princess in disguise I should think, and travelling third-class too."

As the dreadful old woman proceeded to explain to the compartment generally the cause of her surprise, Mary was glad to escape at the next station, and quite forgot to say good-bye to her new acquaintance, Mr. Bates, whose Christian name she feared would hardly be likely to atone for the plebeian nature of his surname.

#### CHAPTER III.

It was a bright Monday in April before Mary saw him again. Spring had come, as the Londoner knew by the tender green buds on some blackened branches, and by the baskets of primroses at the street-corners.

"You have been into the country?" said Ben Bates, almost with a disappointed air, as soon as he had wished her good evening.

She shook her head with a smile, which showed her pretty white teeth, and made her face almost beautiful.

"No. What makes you think so?"

"I saw you had some daffodils, and I thought you had picked them yesterday."

"No. Someone gave them to me."

"Oh!" was the monosyllabic reply, lengthened out, however, as much as a monosyllable can be.

"She had been staying in the country, and brought back a big basket of them with her," she went on, wondering at his injured tone, and quite unconscious that she was removing the cause. "Such a basket! I wish you could have seen it. I like daffodils—don't you?"

"The daffodils"

"That come before the swallow dars, and take The winds of March with beauty,"

he quoted in a pleasant voice. "That I do."

"What's that? Say it again."

He repeated the lines, and waited to see the effect upon her.

"Before the swallow dares," she said slowly. "The swallows are not back yet. I watch them sometimes in our street on a Sunday afternoon, in the summer."

"That's Shakespeare," he explained. "Do you read Shakespeare?"

"Did not he write plays?" she asked, a little doubtfully. "Aunt Hester thinks theatres are wicked."

"Oh, does she? And does she think Shakespeare wicked, too?"

"I don't think she ever read him. I like that, though—that come before the swallow dares. I shall think of the daffodils when I next see the birds skimming about."

"I was in the country yesterday, too, and I brought some flowers back. I've kept them for you. Somehow I thought of you when I picked them."

She held her breath in admiration as he opened his basket and drew out a bunch of wood-anemones—those frail spring flowers so little known to Londoners.

"Did you get them for me?" she asked as she lifted her face from a close inspection of the green leaves and white petals. "How very, very good of you."

As the flush of pleasure faded from her face, and left it paler and more delicate than before, his comparison of her with the flowers she held in her hand seemed no inapt one. He looked at her intently, and something in his expression made her droop her face over her flowers, and ask hurriedly:

"Oh, where do they grow—where did you pick them?"

When she looked up he was smiling at her in his good-humoured half-patronising way, and she wondered why she had felt shy of him.

"I found them growing in a wood—hundreds of them—and I thought you'd like them. They are pretty, aren't they? Do you know what they are called? They're anemones—that means the wind flowers; I suppose, because they are such delicate things that they are blown about by every breeze. They ought to have something big and strong to shelter them, oughtn't they?"

Mary nodded.

"Do they?" she asked simply.

"Some of them do. They grow up close to the trees, which are not half, nor a quarter, as pretty as they are, but which keep off the cold winds from them."

"What a lot you do know," she said admiringly. "Have you read a great deal?"

"I wish I had," he said, with a real humility which contrasted strongly with his ordinarily somewhat self-assertive manner. "I haven't time to read much, but I pick up bits here and there."

"You seem to know a good deal about flowers."

"Oh, I go into the country every Sunday. I find it freshens up my wits more than anything."

"Every Sunday! Do you really?"

"Don't you ever go?" he asked, struck once more with the contrast between her lot and his. "It would do you a world of good."

She shook her head.

"I couldn't," she said. "Aunt Hester wouldn't like it."

"But what do you do on a Sunday?" he persisted.

"Oh, in the morning I go to chapel, in the afternoon I look out of window."

"What do you look at?"

"Oh, at the street and the people going up and down."

His keener intellect, with its more active power of suffering and of enjoyment, shrank from the picture she had conjured up, and pitied her far more intensely than she would ever pity herself.

"Don't you ever go on the river, or to Hampton Court, or to Hampstead?" he asked. "There are no end of places round London where one may have an afternoon in the open air without walking too far."

She shook her head.

"I don't know where Hampton Court is," she replied timidly. "Is it far off?"

"Not very; but don't you ever go for a jaunt anywhere?"

"No. Aunt says the only jaunt she wants to go is the jaunt to heaven."

Mary was not gifted with a sense of humour, and she was shocked at her companion's sudden outburst of laughter.

"To heaven! And when is she going there?" he asked as soon as he recovered from his surprise at the incongruous association of ideas.

"You oughtn't to laugh," said Mary severely; "she is a very good woman."

"I daresay," he made answer carelessly. "I've known all sorts of disagreeable people, bad disagreeable people and good disagreeable people, and the last do the most harm by a long way."

"They might do much more if they were bad," said Mary, actually plucking up sufficient courage to contradict one who was

to her a marvel of wisdom and of information. "Besides, whether they do harm or not, people ought to be good."

Mr. Bates would have liked to argue out the whole question of what is meant by good and bad; but he had sense to desist. The less a woman knows about her subject or about logic, the more certain is her triumph over any male adversary.

"Anyhow," said Mary, with a comfortable sense of being on firm ground, as she returned to a special from a general statement, "it was very good of you to bring me the flowers, and I am much obliged to you."

"Perhaps I may bring you some more," he said with a hesitation which was not unbecoming. "You always go by this train on Mondays and Thursdays, don't you? So do I."

Thus it came to pass that on whatever other day in the week Mary reached home late, she was always, as her aunt, Mrs. Goddard, noticed, as punctual as clockwork on Mondays and Thursdays.

Her whole life became changed and beautified by the certainty of seeing Ben's face looking out of the carriage window as the train stopped at Moorgate Street, and the intense pleasure of their meeting radiated through the rest of the week as a gentle, calm happiness which suffused itself over every commonplace act and event.

It is easy to smile at the absurdities of the situation; to object to the somewhat priggish pedantry of a self-educated Londoner, and the facile vanity of a badly-dressed, ignorant girl; but it is, perhaps, wiser, and certainly pleasanter, to dwell upon those deeper feelings which, beautiful and beautifying in every class, are most precious in those lives which know but little of external loveliness.

So the charm worked through the bright spring days, and the sultry summer ones, until an early, chilly autumn fell upon the London streets, and tore the yellow leaves from the smoky branches. During that time the two travellers had learnt to know one another well, although their acquaintance was limited to those short meetings which seemed to both the most important events of the summer. Often, when the close air seemed to lie like a weight upon their lungs during their evening journey, did Ben paint in glowing colours the delights of a Sunday under the trees in Epping Forest, or on the river by Hampton Court. However eloquent he was—and Mary drank in his words with thirsty, wondering ears—he expended his

energies in vain. Her only answer was, "I know aunt would not like it," and against this he had nothing to urge, although he did not guess that her chief objection to the scheme lay in the fact that, before she could accede to it, she must tell her aunt of this new friend, whose existence was a secret from all but herself.

Ben was quite contented to remain in ignorance of her home and her people; to him as to her there was a romance about their regular meetings which raised them—as some other lovers have been raised before them—quite above the ordinary level of everyday life.

#### CHAPTER IV.

IT was on a chilly Monday in October that they first failed to meet, and Mary, who was punctual to the usual time, went on her way with a dull sense of misery which seemed to weigh on her with deadly oppression during the whole of the next day. But it slipped from her suddenly as she saw him waiting for her on the platform of the station, as she descended the steps when her day's work was over. The colour deepened in her cheek, which had grown thinner during the hot summer months, and the light brightened in her eyes. Ben was not the only man who looked at her with admiring glance as she moved to meet him, but his was the only face she saw.

"That's right," he said, taking her hand in both his; "I've been waiting for you ever so long. I've no end to say to you, and I've taken second-class tickets so that we can have a quiet talk."

The rush of passengers was over, and the two were able to secure a compartment to themselves. Mary's heart was beating wildly; nor did it quiet itself when Ben began to unfold the long story, which soon resolved itself into the fact that he had had an offer much too good to be refused, if he would go out to Sydney.

When she understood him, the colour deepened in her cheeks and she looked up at him with despairing eyes. He was struck with her exceeding beauty, but with a strange pang he realised too that there was a subtle change in her which he had never before noticed.

"You are ill," he said abruptly, with a suddenness which startled her aching heart, already sore with misgiving.

"Oh no," she made answer, with a certain dignity. "I am very well; tell me more about yourself."

He was only too glad to talk, to pour out all his plans and hopes, but the one which was the centre of all he never mentioned—the boldest of wooers may well shrink from telling his story in a railway-carriage, when the train stops every five minutes to take in fresh passengers.

"Is this your station?" he asked, as he saw her gathering together her bag and umbrella. "Oh, I had so much to say to you, but suppose I must go home and tell my mother now. I didn't want to tell anyone until I had mentioned it to you."

Mary tried to smile in answer, but he did not give her time to speak.

"And you'll come by this train to-morrow, won't you? For there is something I want to say to you; but I think you know what it is, don't you, dear?"

She put her hand into his hard, rough fingers, and looked up at him with a timid, trustful expression which spoke a soul at peace with itself.

Just then the train stopped, and she got out, but he took her hand again, and said:

"To-morrow, as usual."

Then he watched her disappear among the crowd which shut her out from his sight. This is a very ordinary story, hence it cannot record that any thrill of warning ran through him; he was full of happiness and hope, and he never suspected that the crowd which closed in round her shut her out from his eyes for ever.

The next afternoon he was at the station half an hour before the appointed time, which seemed to him as if it would never come, and then when it did come he longed to go back to the interval of dreary waiting, for it brought no Mary.

Train after train came up and went on its way, but the familiar figure and the smiling face which he had seen in imagination a thousand times never appeared before his waking eyes.

The evening wore away into night, and he made his way home in silent discontent; but, with the morning, hope revived—a new day brought new chances, new certainty of meeting, and he faced his work like a man who knows that his happiness is sure, if delayed.

It was only on the evening of the third day that he broke down altogether.

"It is just like a woman," he muttered to himself bitterly. "She has got frightened at the notion of going so far, or perhaps she finds she does not care enough about me after all, and instead

of speaking the truth bravely, she avoids me, and hides from me. It is just like a woman. Well, I'll think no more about her."

This mood lasted for a longer space of time than might have been expected. During a whole week he continued to persuade himself that he was callous upon the subject, but on the Saturday he left work early, and gave up his pretended stoicism.

"I must find her—I must find her!" his heart cried, and so he paced up and down the dreary streets near the station where she had alighted, and looked up with a wild longing that he might see her face at the window. He knew no other means of tracing her: to ask at the post-office for a Mary Brown, who lived with her Aunt Hester, could only arouse the smiles of the officials, and could avail him nothing. So he paced up and down the streets hoping by chance to find the one where she dwelt.

Twice he passed down it all unconscious, and the second time he paused. It was a very ordinary street of shabby houses, with a few children playing in the gutter and on the steps. The dull monotony was broken by a very ordinary sight—a shabby mourning-coach was waiting at one of the doors, and on the steps was a tall woman in black, whilst a little boy of ten years old was sobbing by her side. There was nothing uncommon or remarkable in the scene; but Ben paused to let them pass into the coach, and then, as the child lifted up his tear-stained face and burst into a fresh anguish of sobs, he turned quickly away with a man's impatience of a grief he can do nothing to relieve.

He could not guess the truth, or he would have fallen upon his knees in an agony of grief, which would have swallowed up all lesser sorrows.

The shabby little funeral passed away. He turned and looked after it, unconsciously that it was bearing away all that was left of the hope and joy of his life.

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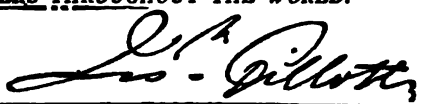
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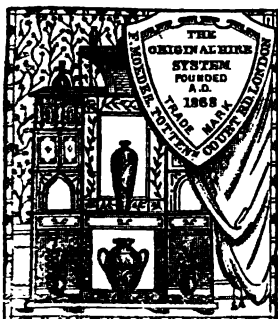
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He was only too glad to talk, to pour out all his plans and hopes, but the one which was the centre of all he never mentioned—the boldest of wooers may well shrink from telling his story in a railway-carriage, when the train stops every five minutes to take in fresh passengers.

"Is this your station?" he asked, as he saw her gathering together her bag and umbrella. "Oh, I had so much to say to you, but suppose I must go home and tell my mother now. I didn't want to tell anyone until I had mentioned it to you."

Mary tried to smile in answer, but he did not give her time to speak.

"And you'll come by this train to-morrow, won't you? For there is something I want to say to you; but I think you know what it is, don't you, dear?"

She put her hand into his hard, rough fingers, and looked up at him with a timid, trustful expression which spoke a soul at peace with itself.

Just then the train stopped, and she got out, but he took her hand again, and said:

"To-morrow, as usual."

Then he watched her disappear among the crowd which shut her out from his sight. This is a very ordinary story, hence it cannot record that any thrill of warning ran through him; he was full of happiness and hope, and he never suspected that the crowd which closed in round her shut her out from his eyes for ever.

The next afternoon he was at the station half an hour before the appointed time, which seemed to him as if it would never come, and then when it did come he longed to go back to the interval of dreary waiting, for it brought no Mary.

Train after train came up and went on its way, but the familiar figure and the smiling face which he had seen in imagination a thousand times never appeared before his waking eyes.

The evening wore away into night, and he made his way home in silent discontent; but, with the morning, hope revived—a new day brought new chances, new certainty of meeting, and he faced his work like a man who knows that his happiness is sure, if delayed.

It was only on the evening of the third day that he broke down altogether.

"It is just like a woman," he muttered to himself bitterly. "She has got frightened at the notion of going so far, or perhaps she finds she does not care enough about me after all, and instead

of speaking the truth bravely, she avoids me, and hides from me. It is just like a woman. Well, I'll think no more about her."

This mood lasted for a longer space of time than might have been expected. During a whole week he continued to persuade himself that he was callous upon the subject, but on the Saturday he left work early, and gave up his pretended stoicism.

"I must find her—I must find her!" his heart cried, and so he paced up and down the dreary streets near the station where she had alighted, and looked up with a wild longing that he might see her face at the window. He knew no other means of tracing her: to ask at the post-office for a Mary Brown, who lived with her Aunt Hester, could only arouse the smiles of the officials, and could avail him nothing. So he paced up and down the streets hoping by chance to find the one where she dwelt.

Twice he passed down it all unconscious, and the second time he paused. It was a very ordinary street of shabby houses, with a few children playing in the gutter and on the steps. The dull monotony was broken by a very ordinary sight—a shabby mourning-coach was waiting at one of the doors, and on the steps was a tall woman in black, whilst a little boy of ten years old was sobbing by her side. There was nothing uncommon or remarkable in the scene; but Ben paused to let them pass into the coach, and then, as the child lifted up his tear-stained face and burst into a fresh anguish of sobs, he turned quickly away with a man's impatience of a grief he can do nothing to relieve.

He could not guess the truth, or he would have fallen upon his knees in an agony of grief, which would have swallowed up all lesser sorrows.

The shabby little funeral passed away. He turned and looked after it, unconscious that it was bearing away all that was left of the hope and joy of his life.

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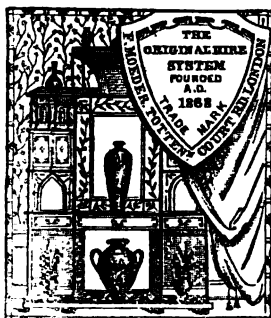
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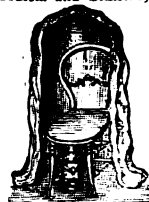
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Shakspeariana—Chap-Book Notes—"Adeste Fideles"—"The Land of the Leal"—John Gilpin—"Reynard the Fox"—"Lead, kindly Light"—Rabelais—London Publishers of 18th Century—The Welsh Testament—The Libraries of Balliol, All Souls, Brasenose, and Queen's Colleges, Oxford—Key to "Endymion"—Early Roman Catholic Magazines—Stuart Literature—The Libraries of Eton, and Trinity College, Cambridge—"Dame Europa." Bibliography—Unpublished Letters of Dr. Johnson—"Book of Ages"—"Eikon Basilike Deutera"—William of Tyre—Bibliography of Skating—"The Book"—Notes on the "Religio Medici"—Authorship of the "Imitatio"—Tristram Shandy—Critical Notes of Charles Lamb.

## Popular Antiquities and Folk-lore.

Slavonic Mythology—Folk-lore of Leprosy—Lycanthropy—North Italian Folk-lore—Friday unlucky for Marriage—West Indian Superstitions—"Milky Way"—Folk-lore of Birds—Feather Superstition—Medical and Funeral Folk-lore.

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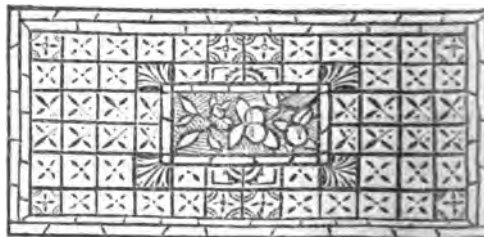
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### CHAPTER XVI.

CHANGES succeed each other very rapidly when once the first has taken place. For years life moves on in quiet sameness, as though nothing could ever alter its course, nothing fresh enter upon it until the end, when it shall enter upon and be lost in the great newness. Then, some day, a little variation creeps into existence. We ourselves, perhaps, introduce it, or, at any rate, make room for it, and welcome it, and it seems like a forerunner sent by fate to prepare the way for greater and ever greater innovations. So that at last, gaining some resting-place on the upward march of life, and, looking back, we can hardly believe that the self of to-day and the self of half-a-dozen years ago are one and the same being.

During the weeks that followed Phoebe's introduction to Clarence Fenchurch, she sometimes found it difficult to believe that all her new delights and interests had arisen from so slight a thing as her picking up Gordon's books for him. She had never before been so happy. For one thing, she and Luke were, for the time, at any rate, free from any pressing anxiety. Peter was doing well at the new mill in the Hollow, was perfectly happy in his employment there, and had conceived an enthusiastic admiration for Gordon, whom he followed, whenever possible, as devotedly as a dog, and in whose company Gordon, apparently, found much pleasure.

There was no need, just yet, to think what was to become of the younger boys. Michael, who came next, was very studious and quiet; perhaps he might be the boy for Uncle Luke. He was too young for any

change to be made in his studies at present. So Luke and Phoebe rested for a time from their anxious thought, and enjoyed life as they had never enjoyed it before.

The little committee met again, as had been proposed; Deborah Leighton being with them. She appreciated the quiet, peaceful evening they spent together as much as any of them, and certainly added greatly to the enjoyment of the others. Her opinion, they soon discovered, was worth more with regard to the selection of the books than any excepting Clarence's. She had read more than any of them, and had understood and remembered, as only those can who are specially gifted.

"I cannot understand you," said Clarence, at last, admiringly. "How have you done it, Deborah? You have worked hard all your life—three times as hard as ever I have done, and yet you have found time to read and learn so much more than I. How do you manage?"

"Indeed, Miss Clarence, I do not know," answered Deborah gravely, "except that I have the love of it. And then you must bear in mind that, through I have to work real hard, yet I'm done with my work after I leave th' mill. I've not to carry th' thought o't through my playtime, as some do."

Phoebe looked up sympathisingly, as though quite understanding what Deborah meant.

"Ah! You know what that means, do you not, Mistress Phoebe?" said Gordon, with the look of tender pity he so often wore when addressing her.

"Yes, indeed I do. But, Deborah—do you mind my calling you Deborah?"

A quick smile and shake of the head were the answer.

"Then, Deborah, if you are not thinking

of your work, what is it that you are thinking of, so often and so earnestly? I meet you often when your mind is so far away that you do not see me—that you do not see anything. I spoke to you last week, and you did not hear me."

Deborah coloured, but answered simply: "It's not my day-work I'm thinking of then—not the work, I mean, that is to earn my bread, and I'm real sorry that I was that rude. It is my other work that I must be thinking about. It puzzles me," she added slowly, a dreamy, thoughtful look coming into her eyes, and her careful speech relapsing into its usual dialect. "It fair moithers me whiles; I canna' just see how to set about it."

"I am not sure that I understand what you mean," said Phoebe.

"I know," said Clarence, "I know; it is Gordon's work and mine, too—is it not, Deborah? But you do it best."

"Nay. I'm none so sure that I do it at all. But, eh! I do wish to do it, and I must. For the help must come from among oursel's, or you, and Mr. Gordon, and the likes of you may work and toil all your lives and never move but a few. There is the mischief. So soon as one gets a bit better than the rest, away he goes. 'I must take a higher place,' says he. 'I'm over-good for the likes of you.' And the poor creatures that are less fortunate must struggle on, not the bit wiser or purer for the light that was sent to one of us. Eh! such a man is no better than a thief."

"Because," said Clarence, with her eyes kindling, "he keeps for himself what was meant to be shared with his brothers. I see, Deborah."

Phoebe looked from one to the other, a gleam of comprehension lighting up her face as she listened.

"I see the work you mean now," said she sadly. "I wish I could share in it; but I cannot. I can do nothing to help the world on."

Gordon and Luke had been listening to the girls as they talked; but now Gordon broke in:

"Do not say so. No one could live as you do without helping the world on. What say you, Luke?"

"There is one little world," said Luke affectionately, "that could not go on at all, if Phoebe moved away from it. But I know what my sister means. We have spoken of it before. We would both like to help our neighbours, if we could, as well as each other."

"I think you do," said Deborah. "At least, I know of one thing you did last week, Miss Carfield, that was a help to one that's very dear to me."

"What can you mean?" said Phoebe curiously. "I do not remember."

"Tell us, Deborah," said Clarence.

"Do you mind meeting our Minnie o' Monday?"

"Yes; she was going home from work."

"She told me of it. 'Eh, Debby,' she said, 'I met Miss Carfield at bottom o' th' brow, an' she spoke to me, an' walked up brow wi' me, an' I were so shamed. I'd been wi' yon lot o' Brownings, an' we were laughin' an' goin' on so noisy-like when she came up, an' Sarah Ann Browning, she shoved agen her; but hoo took no heed. 'Minnie,' hoo said, quite pleasant, 'will you walk on wi' me? I've been wanting to see you.' An' th' more hoo spoke, th' more I felt shamed o' bein' so loud an' noisy. It made me quite hot, it did, now, for sure; an' yet hoo didna' seem to know as I were anyways different to her.'"

Deborah's voice had, in telling her little story, unconsciously to herself, again fallen back into the broad dialect of her county. As a rule, when with her more cultivated friends, she dropped it almost entirely.

Phoebe listened, blushing.

"That was nothing," she said. "I knew she was your sister, and I thought you might not like her to be with those rude girls. It was not any trouble."

"Maybe not; but it has showed Minnie, more than all my talking could do, that they are not nice that can behave so noisily."

"I am glad," said Phoebe quietly.

"Then, Deborah," said Gordon, "to go back to what you were saying before. Do you mean to remain a working-woman all your life?"

"Yes, sir," said Deborah respectfully. She took a sort of pride in remembering, even when a guest at his own house, that she was one of Gordon Fenchurch's hands.

"Do you think you are quite wise there? Have you thought of what you must give up?"

"I have thought of it all, sir, and I cannot see any other way. I'm not sure but I ought even to give up my learning. It seems to put me so far from them."

"No," said Gordon decidedly; "you must not do that. How can you give light if you don't receive it?"

"I will not, sir, if you say so. Indeed, I'm far from wishing it."

Far from wishing it, indeed! Poor Deborah! Would not the want of learning put you farther off from these other friends of yours, to be with whom is like a heaven on earth for you?

"Tell me, Deborah," said Gordon abruptly. "Have you seen anything that makes you particularly anxious just now?"

"It's anxious times, sir, and folk are sadly unsettled all about; but, no, I will not think ours would be so ungrateful as to go wrong just now. They would never do it."

Deborah tried to speak as though she felt what she said, but there was a ring of doubt in her tone that impressed Gordon; and, though he said nothing further then on the subject, he did not forget it. When did he ever forget anything in connection with his business? Outside matters, however interested he might be in them when brought immediately under his notice, constantly slipped away from his mind without leaving any trace on his memory. His sister would never trust him with even the smallest errand. But his business affairs he knew by rote thoroughly, remembering, with no apparent effort, long lists of pieces, and prices, and patterns, and never taking any note, however important might be the facts it was necessary he should remember.

## CHAPTER XVII.

THAT evening was the last time, for a long while, that Phoebe had the pleasure (a very real one to her) of meeting Deborah Leighton at the Holme.

The day after their "committee meeting" Mrs. Watkins called on Mrs. Carfield and had a very long conversation with her, the result of which was that Phoebe, going into the room just at its close, found her mother crying pitifully, while her guest sat bolt upright opposite to her and lectured her.

Mrs. Watkins had the reputation of never being at a loss for something to say. She was never so happy as when enjoying a good talk—i.e., one which she could keep entirely to herself. On the present occasion she kept dribbling on in a painfully monotonous tone, emphasising what she said by impressive pauses, in every one of which poor Mrs. Carfield burst out crying afresh, rocking herself to and fro, and sobbing like a little child.

"Mother dear," said Phoebe, "what can be the matter?"

"Oh, Phoebe, Phoebe, I never would have believed it of you! Not though I'd seen it with my own eyes, I never would!"

"Not believe what? Don't cry so, dear! you'll be ill."

"Oh, it's too dreadful; and, oh, dear me, I've lost my pocket-handkerchief."

"Here it is. Now, mother, what is the matter?"

"I will tell you, Phoebe," began Mrs. Watkins.

"Oh, she's beginning again! Stop her, Phoebe; take her away or take me away. Tell her it was not my fault."

Mrs. Carfield clung to Phoebe as she spoke in a way that alarmed her very much.

"Mrs. Watkins," said she, "will you please go into the drawing-room; my mother is ill."

"No, Phoebe; I have succeeded in awakening your mother to a sense of the impropriety of your behaviour, and now I will speak to you in her presence. This is a shocking display of temper on the part of your mother. She has truly a most lamentable want of self-control."

Phoebe wasted no more words on Mrs. Watkins, but, going to the door, called Matilda, who immediately appeared, brisk and decided in manner as usual.

"Matty, please take Mrs. Watkins away," said Phoebe hurriedly; "mother is very ill."

Matty stepped up to Mrs. Watkins and stood over her, erect and stately.

"Allow me to show you the way to the drawing-room, please," said she with the most frigid politeness.

She and Mrs. Watkins were enemies of old.

"I will not, Matilda Carfield," said the lady, stiffening herself against the back of her chair, as though she meant to stay there for ever.

There is a certain aggressive way of calling one by one's full name, which is especially provoking, particularly if that name happens not to be a remarkably euphonious one. Nothing aggravated Matty more than to hear Mrs. Watkins call her Matilda Carfield. It had its usual effect upon this occasion, and her black eyes flashed as she answered:

"I must trouble you to leave the room immediately, and—and if you do not, Mrs. Watkins, I will carry you out."

Although she spoke quietly, she looked so very much as if she meant what she said, and so very capable of fulfilling her threat, that Mrs. Watkins came to the conclusion that prudence was the better part of valour. With a gasp of dismay



she rose and walked with all the dignity she could muster (which was not much) into the next room, where she collapsed upon a sofa. Matty, quite regardless of the horror-stricken glance of reproof that followed her, left her unwelcome guest there to recover herself, and there Mr. Carfield found her when he came in.

To Mr. Carfield Mrs. Watkins poured out all her grievances, he listening to her with a most encouraging air of sympathy.

"I came here," said she, "with the best of intentions, with nothing but the most neighbourly good-will in my heart, and I have been insulted, Mr. Carfield—grossly insulted."

"Insulted, madam, and in my house!" said Mr. Carfield, assuming all the grave courtliness of manner which his acquaintance thought so charming. "Believe me, I shall consider no reproof too severe for one who has so grossly forgotten himself."

"Herself, sir; it is your daughter Matilda of whom I speak."

"Madam, you astonish me! Of what has my daughter been guilty?"

"She threatened to carry me out of the room, sir! To carry me—Mrs. Watkins! Do you understand?"

"She shall apologise at once," said Mr. Carfield with great determination of manner, but with an inward sinking of courage. He was afraid of Matty, and would far rather have had to deal with Phoebe, who generally submitted with meekness to all his grumbling and capriciousness.

However, he rang the bell, and desired that Miss Matilda might be sent at once to him. She came, bringing Phoebe with her.

"Come along," she said sternly to the reluctant girl, "and let us get to the bottom of all this hubbub. You had better come with me or you will have to face them by yourself, and you know you will not like that."

So both the sisters presented themselves before their father, Phoebe pale, trembling, altogether unstrung by the scene she had just gone through, Matty flushed, angry, and defiant.

"Matty," began Mr. Carfield nervously, "I am afraid—that is, Mrs. Watkins tells me—that you have not behaved quite so well as might be desired to her."

"Mr. Carfield, I asserted that Matilda had insulted me."

"You hear, Matty. Now, of course, my dear, you will apologise."

His expression made his speech an entreaty. But Matty was ruthless.

"Of course," said she calmly, "I shall do nothing of the sort. I think it highly probable that next time I find Mrs. Watkins frightening my mother into hysterics, I shall carry her out without saying anything about it."

Mrs. Watkins rose up in her indignation and approached Mr. Carfield. She was almost inarticulate with passion.

"You hear?" said she. "You hear? And will you not force her to apologise to me at once?"

The poor man looked from one to the other in the most pitiful perplexity.

"My dear madam——" he began.

"What is the use of saying 'My dear madam' in that way? Are you not master in your own house, Mr. Carfield? I demand an apology."

"Really——"

"Really," said Matty decidedly, "it is time there was an end to this. I am not going to apologise, Mrs. Watkins, so you may as well be content, and let us know what is the meaning of all this disturbance?"

"Yes," said Mr. Carfield, recovering himself; "what is the meaning of all this disturbance? What have you been doing, Phoebe?" And he turned angrily to his eldest daughter.

"Now, father," interrupted Matty again, "I am not going to have Phoebe frightened. You know, and I know, and everybody knows that, whoever has been doing wrong, it is not she."

"Are you aware, Mr. Carfield," said Mrs. Watkins solemnly, "are you aware that your eldest daughter is in the habit of consorting with the females who work in Mr. Fenchurch's mill? Are you aware that she is running the risk of having her morals contaminated, and her manners—such as they are—ruined by meeting, day after day, the most misguided among those females—a young woman by name Deborah Leighton?"

Even Phoebe, meek as she always was when it was only herself who got into hot water, would not quietly hear her friend spoken ill of. She stepped hastily forward.

"Why do you call Deborah Leighton misguided?" she asked indignantly. "If you know anything of her, you must know how good she is."

"I call her misguided because, being placed by Providence in a certain position

in life wherein she ought to do her duty, she is instead daily striving to raise herself out of that position, even to the extent of taking lessons in the higher branches of learning, such as are only fitted for the upper classes of society."

"Oh dear me, what nonsense!" said Matty impatiently. "Mrs. Watkins, you talk like a jackdaw fiddling."

"Like a—what did you say, Matilda?" almost screamed the poor lady.

"Like a jackdaw fiddling," responded Matty coolly.

Mrs. Watkins was conquered. She rose and went towards the door, and when she reached it, turned and said:

"I have warned you, Mr. Carfield. It is for the last time. Matilda Carfield"—Matty jumped, and Mrs. Watkins took hold of the door-handle as she went on—"I forgive you. If ever you need assistance, as, goodness knows you are like enough to do before long, going on as you are, you may come to me. But I will never again enter a house where I have been threatened with being carried, and where I have been compared to—to a jackdaw fiddling."

She disappeared, and Matty sank back into a chair with a sigh of relief.

"Vanquished!" said she. "Congratulate me, Phoebe. It was a famous victory!"

But Mr. Carfield's wrath would no longer be stayed. He poured forth a torrent of angry reproof upon Phoebe, finishing by forbidding her ever again to meet Deborah Leighton.

Like most weak-minded people, he could be very obstinate when he chose, imagining, probably, that obstinacy was strength of mind.

Now that Mrs. Watkins had, by her reproaches, wounded his dignity, he felt bound to vindicate it, at any rate, in his own eyes, and would not be persuaded by any arguments to revoke his decision.

Matilda would have openly disobeyed him, but Phoebe could not do that without some better reason than her own pleasure, and so was obliged to submit to being separated from her friend. Thus it was some time before she again had any conversation with Deborah Leighton.

#### CHAPTER XVIII.

"PETER?"

"Well, Matty?" answered Peter.

It was Saturday afternoon, and he was reclining on the sofa in the dining-room,

with his heels where his head ought to have been, and Jules Verne's latest wild romance in his hand.

"Do put away that silly tale and listen to me," said Matty. "I want you to talk a little."

"Silly tale indeed!" rejoined the boy indignantly. "I'd have you know that a wiser person than you said it was the cleverest book of its sort that he ever had read. So now, Miss Matty!"

"Who was this superlatively wise person?"

"Superlatively wise because wiser than you. Oh, Matt!"

"Now, Peter, don't tease! I want to know really!"

"Oh yes; girls are always wanting to know. Well, then," seeing that she began to look annoyed, "it was Dick."

"Dick?" said Matty interrogatively.

"Yes, Dick—Mr. Fenchurch's cousin who has come to stay at the Holme. He lent me this."

"Oh! And so Dick is very clever, is he?"

"No end," replied Peter, sitting up and running his fingers through his twisted hair. "I tell you what, Matt, if he comes here Dan may shake in his shoes, for Dick's a real poet, and no mistake."

"How do you know?"

"Oh, everybody knows. Why, he makes his living by writing!"

"Does he?" Matty's tone was so peculiar that Peter looked at her curiously, and said speculatively:

"Now I wonder why you should object to that?"

"I don't. I only thought he did not look like it."

"When did you see him?"

"Was it not he who came round the garden with you on Thursday evening?"

Peter made a sound of comprehension.

"So that was what you were driving at, was it?" said he. "Pray what was the young man you saw like?"

"Rather short, very jolly-looking, bright blue eyes, curly hair, and a big mouth. Oh no, Peter, he could not be a poet!"

Peter leant back and laughed immoderately, and was so long in recovering his gravity that Matty lost patience, and flying at him, shook him vigorously by the shoulders.

"I beg your pardon, Matt," he said at last. "It was only that it was so funny to think that you, who I thought could not bear young men, should be just like the

rest of the girls. To think that you should have noticed all that!"

"Of course one notices every stranger when one sees so few. Now do not be a goose, Peter, but tell me—was that Dick?"

"Yes, that was Dick. Only I should think it would be more proper if you were to say Mr. Sanders."

"And is he a poet?" asked Matty, ignoring the brotherly advice.

"Yes. Why not? Do you think a fellow can't be a poet unless he wears his hair all untidy, and goes about with his face as long as a yard-stick?"

"If wearing untidy hair would make a poet you'd be one at once," said Matty severely.

"Not," went on Peter, "that Dick owns to it, you know. Bless you, he gets quite angry when they call him a poet. Says he's nothing but a verse-maker, and that there are not six poets in England. He can talk. You just ought to hear him, Matty."

"How can I hear him? I shall never see him to speak to."

And Matty struck her needle through a button with such a vicious dab that Peter's sharp eyes noticed it.

"I tell you what," he said after a pause. "You shall see him. It's an awful shame to keep you cooped up here, never seeing anyone. How are you to get married?"

"I don't want to get married. Don't be vulgar, Peter," said Matty ungratefully.

"First time I ever heard of its being vulgar to get married. Besides, if you don't want to get wed you might think of our feelings, Matt."

"I would not marry if a duke asked me. So there, Peter!"

"Well, you sha'n't marry. You shall be a jolly old maid, you shall, and have a lap-dog and a parrot. But I shall bring Dick to tea next Saturday, so mind you give us something good to eat. He's an awful fellow for sweet things."

"Don't bring him. I hate a clever man."

"Why, you don't hate old Gordon, do you? He's awfully clever."

"Yes, I do hate him. He's good, too, and that's worse. I don't believe he ever did a bad thing in his life."

"That's true," said Peter; "but then," he added apologetically, "perhaps he can't help it, Matt. Some people are made so, you know. Anyway, Dick's not a bit like him."

"Then he is a prig. I know he's a prig, Peter."

"He's nothing of the sort," said Peter, getting up with an air of deep offence. "I never did see anyone so silly and prejudiced as you are. I shall bring him to tea, and if you do not have things nice—why, you'll be sorry for it—that's all."

With which prophetic remark he took himself and his wounded dignity out of the room.

Dick Sanders did come to tea with Peter on the following Saturday, which, thanks to that young gentleman, was a very eventful one. As to who Dick was—he was, as Peter had said, a cousin of Gordon Fenchurch's. The very day after that last delightful committee-meeting, Gordon, driving home from Rochdale, and out of spirits as he always was when he had seen Everett, became aware of a figure leaning against his gate and in meditative mood surveying the landscape opposite. He drew up and looked at the youth, who politely opened the gate for him, and then with calm self-possession said:

"Drive on to the house, Mr. Fenchurch; I'll follow and speak to you there." Which accordingly he did. "I am your cousin, Mr. Fenchurch," said he; "I am come down from London to see if you will take me in for a while; I want to study Lancashire life."

"Do you mean," said Gordon, "that you are my Aunt Eveleen's son?"

"The same," said the lad.

And Gordon then, Gordon-like, opened his house-door and said:

"Walk in, Dick; I am sure Clarence and I are very glad to see you."

So Dick walked in and was introduced to Clarence, who rang the bell and ordered another place at the tea-table, thereby astonishing even Dick, who, cool as he was, began to think that he had found his equals in self-possession.

"Do you know, Cousin Gordon," said he presently, "that I consider that you are a very imprudent man?"

"And why, pray?"

"Well, if any stray young man wants a night's lodging, and don't know where to get it, I would advise him to come here and say that he is your cousin—that is all."

"Upon my word," said Gordon, laughing, "I never thought of trying to identify you. I suppose you are Richard Sanders, are you not?"

"Well, yes, as it happens, I am. But

it is awfully imprudent in you to be willing to take my word for it."

"And it is awfully ungrateful in you to carp at my imprudence, under the circumstances. But come now, tell us something about yourself. What made you think of coming to me?"

"Well," said the lad, a shade of sadness coming over his face, "I am all alone in the world now, you know."

"Alone?"

"Yes; my father died six months ago, and I've been living all alone in lodgings ever since; and I was so tired of my own company."

"What have you been doing for yourself? Don't think me impertinent, Dick; I am an old fellow now, and entitled to ask questions."

"You look old—very," said Dick, with a quizzical look at his cousin. "And I don't think you impertinent at all; but I am not quite sure what such a practical business man as you may think of my occupation."

Gordon winced. He could never get used to this description of himself, often as he heard it.

"How do you know what I am?" he asked.

"Oh, my cousin Everett wrote to me. That was really what made me come down. I hardly knew anything about any of you before."

"I am completely puzzled," said Gordon. "How came Everett to write to you at all?"

"Is not Everett very literary?" asked Dick gravely, but with a humorous twinkle in his eye. "He saw my name at the end of an article in one of the monthlies, and wrote to claim me as a cousin in fact, and a brother in letters."

"Oh," said Gordon coolly, "that is your occupation, is it? Pray, how much does it amount to?"

"In pounds, shillings, and pence, do you mean?"

"Yes. Do you not know that a practical business man looks at everything in the light of a money speculation, and values it at its market price?"

"Gordon dear, how can you talk so?" remonstrated Clarence, a tone of keen pain in her voice.

"Well," said Dick, "my pen brings me in about two hundred a year at present. I hope to improve by-and-by."

"You had much better have gone to Everett," said Gordon, still rather coldly.

"You will not find me at all a congenial spirit."

"I am not so sure of that," said Dick slowly. "Everett invited me to go to see him; but I thought I would rather come on here. I have been with him a couple of days."

"Why, Gordon," said Clarence, "did not Everett tell you?"

"Never said a word about it," said Gordon, looking excessively annoyed.

"Never mind," said Dick quietly; "I dare say the old boy thought there was something romantic and literary in a nice little mystery."

"Upon my word," said Gordon, "you are a cool hand. And, pray, why did you not stay with Everett?"

"Well, do you know Mrs. Everett very well?"

"Yes," answered Clarence, as much meaning in her reply as in his question.

"She was always talking about you two, and she raised a sort of interest in you in my mind, so when she'd said so much that there did not seem to be anything fresh behind, I thought I'd come out here and see you for myself. I hope you have no objection?"

"Oh dear no," said Gordon bitterly. "You are quite welcome to study a money-grubber from nature if you have a mind to. Only I wish you had come here first."

"Oh, I do not. I think my cousin Everett is a remarkably interesting man. Such an unusual combination of the refined student and the courteous gentleman with the energetic, far-seeing business man. Really it is quite wonderful to find a literary character with such a keen insight into business affairs."

"Do you really mean to say that you believe that the two things can go together?"

"Oh, of course. I believe what I am told. Look here, Cousin Clarence, I am sleepy, can I go up to bed?"

So saying he retired, leaving the brother and sister looking at each other with a half-pleased, half-puzzled expression of countenance, both of them feeling that they did not quite know what to make of the youthful relative who had thrown himself so unexpectedly upon their hospitality.

"How old do you suppose he is, Gordon?" said Clarence.

"I cannot guess. He does not look more than eighteen, but he must be older."

"Well, I like him," said Clarence energetically. "He has not believed Everett's abuse of you, evidently."

"A poor reason for liking him, darling. Ah, Clarence, Clarence, how you stick to your worthless, money-making, worldly brother!"

### PLANT LORE.

WE saw something lately about the malignity of plants, their foresight and thrift, and other human qualities; but the plants that exhibit these in such an unmistakable way as to satisfy the scientist are comparatively few. The sundew does eat flies, and lays itself out to catch them; but you may live all your life and never see a sundew. The same with pitcher-plants, which have won such undeserved fame as storers of water for the thirsty traveller, whereas the water-storing is an accident, the pitchers having been meant to gather beetles, moths, and such small deer, on whose juices the sham benefactor of mankind batten. In Madagascar there are plenty of pitcher-plants; so there are in Borneo. There is a whole tribe of them peculiar to America, but still I do not know any private place where they are to be seen. The carrion-flower, which lays itself out to attract flies by its smell, is rarer still; in fact, in Europe the plants which are not content to live simple vegetable lives mostly keep out of the way. I cannot think of any except the dodder, whose bright red threads and knots of rosy blossoms (yellow in Germany, where it is a great pest) you may see on the furze of Wimbledon or any Surrey heath, and which, from its destroying the plant on which it fastens, is called strangle-tare, or hell-weed. Its beauty, by the way, has gained it a much prettier name—*lady's-laces*.

But contrasting strangely with the few plants that the scientist will really accept as animal in their ways, is the vast number to which men have attributed potencies and influences which, if real, would lift them far above our feeble human powers. I suppose it is not the plants themselves which were thought able to do such wonders, but the planets or gods to whom they respectively belonged who endued them with special virtues. All the vegetable kingdom was divided between Sol, and Venus, and Mercury, and the rest. Thus rocket is "under the dominion of Mars," which, doubtless, accounts for what

Pliny, quoted by Gerarde, says of it: "Who-soever taketh the seed thereof before he be whipt shall be so hardened that he shall easily endure the paines." But what rocket? That is the worst of these sovran remedies; there is always something about them that is not quite clear and straightforward. Rocket is the wild, scentless mignonette, which makes the best of yellow—or, with indigo, of green—dyes for wool, and is, therefore, also called yellow-weed. The London rocket is a cruciferous plant, belonging, that is, to the same natural order as the wallflower and the turnip, which is said to have covered the ruins of the great fire of 1666 with its small yellow flowers. Then again, the night-scented stock—*Hesperis*—is called garden rocket, and there are other rockets besides; so whoever wanted to harden himself would be in a quandary.

The rose is so important that it is shared by three planets: Jupiter presiding over the red, Luna over the white, Venus over the damask. I have never been to Towton, but the tradition is that there, after Yorkists and Lancastrians had heaped the ground with mingled slaughter, a rose grew up, and still flourishes, of a kind found nowhere else in the island.

The white rose of the Stuarts is said to come in bloom on the old Pretender's birthday.

Of all the days that's in the year  
The tenth of June I love most dear,  
When sweet white roses do appear  
For sake of James the Rover.

Over rosemary, and pimpernel, and marigold the Sun has undivided sway. Among lunar plants is the moon-daisy, our wild white chrysanthemum, which sometimes makes upland pastures too gay to please the farmer. That odd-looking flowering fern, too, the moonwort, follows its name. It was an alchemist's plant, capable of extracting sterling out of quick silver. It also opened locks and pulled off horseshoes. Du Bartas writes:

Horses that, feeding on the grassie hills,  
Tread upon Moonwort with their hollow heels,  
Though lately shod, at night goe barefoot home.

And Culpepper, explaining why it is called unshoe-the-horse, says that on "White Down, near Tiverton, were found thirty shoes, pulled off from the Earl of Essex his horses, many of them newly shod, and no reason known." Strange, too, to find the sage Aubrey telling how Sir Bennet Hoskins's keeper at Morehampton, Herefordshire, "drove a nail thwert

the hole of a woodpecker's nest, and laid at the bottom of the tree a cleane sheet. Before many houres passed the nail was out, and a leafe lying by it on the sheet. They say the moonewort will doe such things." Honesty, or, as they call it in Devonshire, money-in-both-pockets, is another moon-plant, its name, *Lunaria*, being, doubtless, due to its round, flat, silvery seed-vessels. It was a witches' plant;

Enchanting *Lunaria* here lies  
In sorceries excelling,

sings Drayton. To Saturn belong the blue corn-bottle, the French bleuets, called hurt-sickle because it was thought to turn the edge of that now seldom seen instrument; and the shepherd's-purse, whose Irish name of clappedepouch refers to the old custom of lepers begging by the wayside, and calling attention by rattling two boards against each other; and the pansy. To him also belongs Solomon's seal, which take its name from the six-pointed star which is seen on its sliced root, and which, Gerarde says, is "of incomparable virtue for inward bruises and for knitting of bones and members out of joynt." By the way, this kind of *Convallaria* is rare in England; I never found it wild, and I have found most English plants. Its lovely sister, the lily-of-the-valley, grows profusely on the gravelly hills near Croydon towards Caterham; a tricyclist or bicyclist may get any quantity of it on his Saturday half-holiday. Another Saturnian plant is the beech, and it well deserves to belong to the gloomy god if what Gerarde says is true: "This wood being brought into the house there follows hard travail of children and miserable deaths, and, therefore, it is to be forborne, and not used as firewood." I wonder how much of all that Gerarde believed. Probably he evolved it all, grimly chuckling as he did so, because he read in his Pliny that beech-wood should not be cut for fuel.

Among Mercury's plants are the bracken, in whose sliced root you may see the oak—one of those squat, broad-branched Midland county oaks, so different from the slim, foreign-looking oaks of the Kentish weald—and King Charles in it. If a German is with you, he will interpret the marks to represent the double eagle. In Kent they are supposed to represent Christ's monogram; while in the eyes of some they stand for the tree of knowledge with Adam and Eve on each side of it. To Mercury belongs, too, the honeysuckle—

not the clover, so called in our western counties, but the woodbine, Chaucer's emblem of fidelity, which cured consumption if the patient was thrice passed through a wreath of it. It must have been cut "during the increase of the March moon," and afterwards was cut into nine pieces, and burnt. Parsley is Mercurial; to ensure its coming up double they will tell you in Sussex to sow it on Good Friday, while to transplant it is sure to offend its presiding genius, and bring you ill-luck. The clerk of a Devonshire parish, says Mr. Friend, was bed-ridden ever since the parsley-mores (roots) were moved.

We must not think that Venus has all the lovely flowers, or that all her flowers are lovely. Mugwort, and plantain, and tansy, and vervain all belong to her, and are all of them plain even to ugliness. The marsh-mallow—no great beauty—is hers, and so are the clover and the daisy. Mugwort or wormwood is a plant of power. Lupton, in his *Notable Things*, says that "On Midsummer Eve is found under its root a coal, which keeps safe from the plague, carbuncle, lightning, and quartan ague them that bear the same about them. Moreover, it drives away lurking devils, and is sovran against the evil eye." Mermaids, as we saw in our paper on the subject the other day, know its virtues.

Of the plantain the same story is told as of the succory; both grow by the wayside, and each is said to have been a maiden who, worn out with watching at the roadside for her lover, was turned into a plant, which is still always on the road by which he must pass. This pretty story is turned by Professor De Gubernatis into a sun-myth—he is fonder of them than even Professor Max Müller himself. The maiden is the dew, the lover the sun, but the connection is even less apparent than in sun-myths generally. Succory roots open all locks, and make the wearer invisible. Plantain has its own lesser virtues. Boil three roots, and the water from them will cure the tertian, that from four the quartan ague. In Devon it is said once in seven years to turn into a bird, either the cuckoo or its companion—the dinnick. Here is a north-country test of fidelity. Take two plantain-spikes in full bloom, one for the lad, the other for the lass. Carefully remove all the blossoms, and wrap the heads in a dock-leaf and put it under a stone. If by next morning they have blossomed again, there will be "ave love

atween them twae." Tansy-pudding is Easter fare, because of the bitter herbs of the Passover; but why the plant should be a herb of Venus I do not know, unless it be that the name is corrupted from Athanasia, and that love is immortal. The birch, "the lady of the wood," also belongs to Venus. As one gets northward it becomes a poor stunted thing, so that in Sweden it is said to have furnished the rods wherewith the Saviour was scourged, since which time it lost its previously stately growth. In the North, however, it is specially valued; the Russian peasant has as many uses for it as the Eastern has for the palm. He plants it near his house, believing that it is never struck by lightning; and his daughter has her favourite birch, which at Easter she hangs with garlands, and girds round with a bit of red ribbon to keep it safe from the evil eye. Beans—to dream of which is so unlucky—are also plants of Venus. Pythagoras, following the Egyptian use, forbade his followers to eat them; they are, he held, too much akin to flesh for vegetarians. The tradition is that Pythagoras was overtaken and killed because, when pursued by the enemy, he refused to escape across a bean-field for fear of trampling upon souls that had transmigrated into these exceedingly animal plants. The Jewish high-priest was forbidden to eat them on the great Day of Atonement. The Roman flamens were never allowed even to mention them. Italian girls, however, learn by means of beans their fate in marriage. They put three into a bag, one whole, one without the eye, another without the rind. They then draw one, the whole bean portending a rich husband, the eyeless one a sickly man, the rindless one a man without a penny. Everybody knows about the Twelfth Cake beans for king and queen; and most of us have heard that more people go mad while the beans are in flower than at any other time; but it will be news to most that "in Leap Year the beans grow the wrong way"—i.e., are set in their pods just opposite to what they are other years. Of course the violet is a plant of Venus. Is it not Herrick who says that when Jove had turned Io into a heifer, he caused the earth to grow sweet violets, that she might have fit herbage? Hence the Greek name for the plant, *ion* (found in iodine, the violet-coloured substance).

But of all the many plants under Venus's dominion, vervain is specially her own. Venus Victrix (all-conquering

love) was figured wearing a crown of myrtle and vervain intertwined. The magi used to gather it at a time when there was neither sun nor moon, and they poured honey on the ground to atone for robbing it of so precious a plant. The Druids (or rather Druidesses) are said to have done the same; and they showed still more reverence by not touching it with hands. When they wanted a plant, the chief Druidess threw over it a loop, fastening the end to a young maid's left great toe. The girl pulled till she had uprooted it, and the priestess took it on a new white cloth and solemnly carried it to the temple. "Vervain and dill, hinder witches from their will," is the form into which the plant's sanctity has shrivelled up. Boil a gun-flint in vervain, and you will never miss your aim; wear vervain and baked toads in a silken bag round your neck, and you will be cured of king's-evil; are some of the old recipes into which this plant enters.

Jupiter has his plants—the oak, for instance, which in England was used in a heroic method for getting rid of ague. "Go to a cross-oak" (cross-roads' tree), "and peg into it a lock of your hair, then tear out the hair with a sudden wrench, and the oak will take the malady from which you will be freed." Of course to creep through a cleft oak was, in well-timbered countries, as soveran against diseases, as it was in treeless Cornwall to practise the same ceremony through a "holed stone"; and even sleeping under an oak was a cure for paralysis. "If you would turn a black horse dapple-grey, give him oats mingled with a few oak-buttons," says a Danish physician. Perhaps in the strange recipe is an echo of the old Teutonic belief that oaks belonged to the god to whom the horse was sacred. I wonder are any of the trees living which grew from the Boscobel acorns that Charles the Second planted in St. James's Park? and does the Cadenham oak in the New Forest still bud, like the Glastonbury thorn, on Christmas Day? And do farmers' boys still wear gilded oak-apples on Oak-apple Day, as I have seen them do, not many years back, in Somersetshire? The sage, too, is a Jovial plant, the tradition about which runs two ways; for, on the one hand, "toads frequent among it to relieve themselves of their poison; wherefore rue is good to be planted among it, as then they will not come near;" on the other, it was by some supposed to be so



wholesome that the old monkish rhyming verses ran :

Salvia salvatrix, naturæ conciliatrix  
(Sage the saviour, preserver of our nature),  
Cur morietur homo cui Salvia crescit in horto?  
(Why should a man die who grows sage in his garden?)

So we English, limiting the time for using it, said :

He that would live for aye  
Must eat sage in May ;

and old Herbals recommend it to be eaten in that month fasting, with parsley and butter. Dandelion, again, belongs to Jupiter ; the old herbalists knew nothing, by the way, of the virtues of "taraxacum" ; but in Donegal it is called "heart-fever grass," and is used for dyspepsia. Betony, also one of Jove's plants, used to be esteemed a veritable heal-all. "It would seem a miracle to tell what experience I have had of it," says Turner, in 1687. "It is hot and dry, a plant of Jupiter in Aries, and is excellent for infirmities of head and eyes. Being boyled in milk and drunk, it takes away their pains. An old proverb said : "When a man is ill, let him sell his coat and buy betony." Gerarde says : "It is most singular against poyson, and good against biting of mad dogs, venomous serpents, and some write it will cure those that are possessed with devils, being stamped and applied to the forehead."

Well, these are only a sample, and a very inadequate one, of the virtues and vices that our fore fathers and mothers assigned to plants. Look down Mr. Friend's or Mr. Folkard's index, and such names as naughty-man's (i.e., devil's) cherry, devil's-bit, bloody-man's finger (the spike of red arum seeds), Saviour's blanket (mullein, with its woolly leaves), lady's ear-drop (fuchsia), springwort, apples of Sodom, rose of Jericho, flowers of heaven, are each a legend in themselves. This last is that strange jelly which is found on wet gravelly soils. I used to think it was frog spawn ; it really is an alga called nostoc, this name having been given to it by Paracelsus, for in "the dark ages" it was supposed to have wonderful virtues. In England, people sometimes take it to be remains of a falling star ; in Ireland, I remember a man who devoutly believed a huge mass of it to be a ghost that he had hit at, and—he supposed—killed the night before. The Jericho rose might, when I was a boy at a City school, be seen in a shop-window in Gracechurch Street, with a written account that I used to try to read through the panes. It is the anastatica, or resurrection-flower,

which seems to die, rotting off at the root, and curling up into the form of a rose ; but when it is blown by the wind into a damp place it expands, and its seeds being shed, it germinates anew. Those who buy it, expecting to see it bloom out when placed in water, must be rather disappointed at the result.

Springwort takes us out of the sphere of disappointing fact into that of fine, full-flavoured legend. Most countries have the tale, differing as to the plant of which it is told. In England, as we have seen, it is the moonwort ; in Italy, the horseshoe witch, called *sverracavallo*. Quite lately the Countess Gasparin found the belief in it current ; she wrote to De Gubernatis to testify to the fact. In India, it is the sesame. In the Fatherland, the meek, pale primrose is the *schlüsselblume* (key-flower), wherewith the doors of treasure-caves are opened. But it is not always the primrose ; some German legends say that it is a nameless plant found only on St. John's Eve, on ferny hillsides, where it is seen shining with a weird light as the mandrake does. Like the will-o'-the-wisp, it never stands still ; but if you can seize it and wear it in your pocket, you are invulnerable, and can have your fill of the earth's gold. Only do not leave your spring-root inside the treasure cavern ; a shepherd of the Ilsestein, who had accidentally got a bit of springwort on his staff, found the mountain-side open before him. The lady of the cave graciously gave him his pockets full of gold, but he forgot his staff, and as he stepped in to get it, down came the portcullis of rock, and cut him asunder.

The name mandrake, again, suggests legends innumerable and gloriously inconsistent. It is a plant, the *Atropa mandragora* ; though Mr. Friend tells us that in several of our counties—e.g., North Hants and Somerset—the bryony (I suppose he means the white, with its queer, big roots) answers the purpose, and is given to human beings, and also to horses, whose coats it makes sleek. Gerarde, though he went in for (perhaps invented) a good many absurdities, drew the line at mandrakes. "I have in my tyme at divers tymes taken up the rootes of Mandrag out of the grounde ; but never saw I any such thing" (as the human shape) "upon or in them." What is said about it he laughs at as tales, "whether of olde wives or of some runagate surgeons or physicke-mongers, I know not." Yet Josephus fully believed that to

root up mandrakes was a perilous thing. You must cut away all the rootlets; leave even one, and the screams will kill you. The only safe way is to stop your ears, and then tie your dog's tail to the plant and run off. The dog, struggling to follow you, pulls up the root, and falls dead on the spot. The Romans had the same belief. In Dr. Daubeny's *Roman Husbandry*, is given a drawing of the fifth century representing the freshly pulled-up root, as thorough a mannikin as ever was shaped by a German pedlar, and the dog in the agonies of death. One remembers Shakespeare's "Would curses kill as doth the Mandrake's groan?" and the other line in *Romeo and Juliet*. He must have seen mandrakes, for they began to be largely imported into England in Henry the Eighth's time. Is it not Mr. Timbs who gives the letter of the Leipzig burgess to his brother (1675), advising him to try to mend his fortunes by keeping an earth-man? He need only bathe it in warm water four times a year, wrap it in silk, and lay it among his best things, sprinkling the earth-water on all his belongings, and all will be well with him—an easy way that for a rich man to help his poor brother in his need. The German faith in the earth-man came down from the Alruna maidens; one of the names for the root is Alraun. Besides Hexenmännchen (witches' mannikin), it is also called Galgenmännchen, from the notion that it grew where a murderer had been hanged. This notion connects it with the "hand of glory"—its Greek name, mandragora, being just as easily corrupted into main-de-gloire as into mandrake. Up to 1810, and probably later, these earth-men fetishes, as evidently artificial as the mermaids that used to be made by stitching a salmon on to the upper half of a monkey, used to be sold in France. But the French main-de-gloire was also an animal of the mole kind. Mr. Folkard quotes from Ste. Pelaye the story of a farmer who found one under an oak on which mistletoe grew, and kept him there well supplied with food, the main thing being to give him the same amount every day, and always to pay ready money for it, which money would, on the morrow, be returned two-fold.

But I must draw to a close. The subject is endless; even the two gentlemen to whose books I refer those who want to go deeper into it have by no means exhausted it. There is the selago, which gave power to understand the

speech of birds and beasts, and which (as Mr. Folkard portrays on his book-cover) must be gathered by a naked maiden, who had to cover her hand with a new linen cloth, and crook her little finger into the shape of the crescent moon. If she touched it with iron, a storm would arise, bringing misfortune. As soon as it was uprooted, the Druidesses, who had watched her, splashed her with water from a running stream, and then left her to walk backward, "lest the moon should return upon her path." There were no Druids, said Sir Cornwall Lewis, and therefore, presumably, no Druidesses; but Mr. Reade knows Sir Cornwall is wrong, and if one wants old old plant-lore, one should read his *Veil of Isis*, where the story of the selago (what a coming down to think of it as merely the club-moss!) is detailed.

Then there is the dowsing, or divining-rod, which might well fill many pages. With us, the hazel or the rowan have been the favourite woods; in China, the peach. And this reminds me that, of all plant-legends, the weirdest is that about the Chinese Shui-mang. It is a poisonous bean, those who eat of which die, and become Shui-mang devils, nor can they become incarnate unless they find someone who has eaten of the same plant, and will change places with them. Other devils find it comparatively easy to get human bodies; indeed, one of the discomforts of Chinese life must be the uncertainty whether your best friend or your wife is not really a "bogy," just as, in Japan, the handsome young lady who has won your affections, and given you her hand, sometimes turns out, after years of wedded life, to be a fox.

Well, Mr. Friend, in his little Devon village, with his ears open to the folk-lore of all the counties round, and Mr. Folkard, with his methodical study of all the books on the subject, from Mandeville down through Zahn (with his quaint pictures, so much older than his date, 1696) to De Gubernatis, show how much may be done by those who give their minds to the subject. This "lore" is fast fading; the parish doctor is ousting the old woman who was cunning in herbs; and yet it is just as interesting as the local words and phrases which are so sedulously gathered. Why does not somebody in every county invite people with leisure, and tact, and discernment to gather "lore" for themselves, and arrange and verify, so that the books I have named may be the basis of

an exhaustive collection? I say "verify," for such collectors must be on their guard against being humbugged. But tact is even more requisite than shrewdness. In the West people are freer of speech, and faith is stronger. But you might live half your life in a midland or East Anglian village, and never know that under the surface-unbelief there is much which you will never get hold of till you win the people's confidence. Once get that, and you will find that weeds have names, and are still credited with virtues. The doctrine of Signatures, for instance, as plausible in its way as homoeopathy, is still obscurely popular. By it a heart-shaped leaf should cure heart-disease, as Coles says of the medick, or heart-clover: "because not only is the leaf like the heart of a man, but also because each leaf doth contain the perfect icon of an heart, and that in its proper colour." This, thinks Mr. Friend, is why fern-seed was supposed to give invisibility, because ferns are cryptogamous, their organs of fructification being unseen. On the same principle, the major celandine, with its yellow juice, was for jaundice, liver-wort for liver, while nettle-tea is still given for nettle-rash. I must confess we often think that our peasants are in the same condition about plants' names as the Greeks were about the names of animals, when they called the kingfisher a sea-dog, and the eagle the dog of Jove. I used to wonder, for instance, at the Cornish calling foxgloves, which Nature sends them in such profusion to cover the ugly heaps of mine-rubbish, docks or dockana. But Mrs. Bray, in *Borders of the Tamar*, says the real name is "flop-a-dock," curtailed, no doubt, for fear the longer word should make you laugh at the person using it.

Well, there are not many who could do such a work as I have proposed. I wish it had been thought of when George Eliot's "grand old Leisure" was less disturbed by railways, and telegrams, and daily newspapers. And yet there are places, little towns as well as villages, where Leisure is fast recovering. These, where things are sleepier now than in the old coaching days, are the places in which to gather plant-lore, if only one has the skill and the patience. And, if one cannot do it oneself, one can, at any rate, be thankful that men like Mr. Friend and Mr. Folkard, and, last, though not least, Mr. Thiselton Dyer, have taken it in hand before it was too late.

#### SHIPWRECK WOOD.

SEE! how the firelight flashes on the pane.  
Look! how it flickers to the rafters roof,  
That almost gives its brightness back again,  
So far the darkling shadows hold aloof.  
See how it dances, and the warmth is good;  
But all my fire is made of shipwreck wood.

Jem brought these furs from his first voyage back;  
Will found these beads, one day at Elainore;  
And the gold band that clasps my ruffles, Jack  
Bought me with half his pay at Singapore.  
Each speaks of love, and strength, and hardihood;  
But all my fire is made of shipwreck wood.

The sea is roaring over "wandering graves,"  
Where all my best and bravest lie at peace.  
I hear a requiem in the moaning waves  
That only with my parting breath will cease.  
The sea has given me work, and warmth, and food;  
But all my fire is made of shipwreck wood!

#### A PARIS SUBURB.

FEW people when they land on the other side of the Channel, however often they may repeat the experiment, fail to be struck by the difference between the two neighbouring people. Everything is different—the appearance of the people, their manner, their carriage, their way of doing business, their habit of life, their streets, their shops, their houses, even their horses and their dogs. Further experience only deepens this sense of difference, and shows that it extends, not only to idioms of speech, but to modes of thought and habits of mind. The whole people is different, and every fresh experience brings the fact out the more clearly.

One of the most striking of the outward evidences of their difference is in the capitals of the two countries. It is difficult to say where London ends and the country begins. Ten miles away from Charing Cross you are scarcely out of the urban atmosphere. Paris, on the other hand, is almost bounded by the fortifications. The consequence is that the suburbs of Paris are almost as much country villages as the suburbs of London were fifty years ago. Paris is out there, no doubt. They can tell you what those big towers and domes are that you can see looming in the distant town, these suburban folk; but numbers of them have never been in Paris. It is where the train goes, and where the train takes their wine, and their cherries, their figs, and asparagus, but they are utterly ignorant of what the life of the great town is like. They sell their produce to Paris much as the natives of one of the South Sea Islands would sell theirs to the white men, and without seeking to know more of the life of their customers.

There are people, of course, in these vine-growing villages who have daily intercourse with Paris, even people whose business is in Paris, and who come back in the evening as our citizens would go down to Putney after their day's work, but they are merely chance dwellers in an agricultural district. The interest of the country is in the vines; a good vintage is more to them than wars or revolutions. As the season of the vintage comes on, masses are said on its behalf; propitiary bunches of grapes are put in the arms of the statues of the Virgin at every street-corner; and the priest goes out with a solemn procession of cross-bearer, acolytes, and choristers, to bless the vines and sprinkle them with holy-water. In spite of this, however, when there is a wet season and no sun, the crop is occasionally bad, and then there is lamentation in Argenteuil, and all the surrounding villages.

But it is not only in their faith in the blessing of the Church that the dwellers in these French suburbs differ from their brethren in England. The major part of the population are vigneron. Most of them are well-to-do farmers, farming their own vineyards, and possessing realised incomes of four or five hundred pounds a year, to which every year they add more. English farmers in the same case would live in ease, if not in some luxury, and would blame the times when they found they had exceeded their incomes, and had to mortgage their acres. If they lived in a hunting country, they would follow the hounds on occasion, and would have a dog or two to shoot over. Their sons would be sent to boarding-schools, and their daughters would learn to play the piano, though they might not be able to make butter.

The life of a French vigneron is very different. Not necessarily better, but altogether different. Soon after daybreak, summer and winter, the vigneron and his whole family—wife, sons, and daughters, turn out and start for the vineyards. The men are clothed in blue cotton blouses and loose trousers of the same material, sabots on their feet, and black cloth caps on their heads. The women wear dresses of grey woollen stuff, bind their heads up in coloured cotton kerchiefs that are finished off with a curious little knot at the top, and, like their father and brothers, clank along in wooden sabots.

There is generally something to be done in the vineyards and orchards all the year round. In the winter and spring the ground

has to be cleared, then the vines have to be staked, and, as they increase in growth, to be fastened to the stakes. In many vineyards asparagus is grown between the rows of vines, and requires endless care and labour. Much of the large white asparagus with purple-green heads that is sold in London, comes from between the rows of vines in these French suburban vineyards. Later there are the figs to be gathered, and the cherries; and all the while the vines have to be tied, and cleaned, and pruned—each vine receiving individual attention. Then come the gathering of the grapes, and the making of the wine; and lastly the cutting down of the vines, the drawing and stacking of the stakes, the cleaning and dressing of the ground, and the burying of the fig-trees against the winter cold. At certain times of the year this constant labour necessitates the employment of hired help; but for the greater part of the time it is done entirely by the vigneron and his family. Every morning they go out with hoe and knife to their fields, and, except for the necessary meals, do not return till night. Few English farm-labourers work harder, or live more sparsely, than these well-to-do French wine-growers. Except on fête days or Sundays they seldom taste meat. When they cut down their vines in the autumn the stems are stacked for fuel. With a small crackling fire of this wood they boil their coffee in the morning, and their vegetable soup and beans for dinner. This, with coarse brown bread, milk-cheese, and their own thin red wine, they consider enough to work upon from sunrise to sunset.

They are not a highly educated class, it must be confessed. As soon as they can handle a hoe they start with the rest of the family for the vineyards, and so there is no time for schooling. At least it was so not so very many years ago. Now the ubiquitous schoolmaster has got hold of them, and probably someone has to be paid to do the work of the small hoer; but formerly the vineyard was the one interest with which no one thought of interfering. Hoeing, pruning, grape-picking, grape-pressing, wine-storing, wine-selling, and so back to hoeing, pruning, etc., with never another thought or interest except the steadily growing stocking—it is a curiously monotonous life, but one the people seem to lead with perfect content; marrying into the same class, and bringing their children up to do the same with them and after them.

With one of these vigneron I was some years ago on terms of great intimacy. M. Blanc was the owner of extensive vineyards, in a village six or seven miles outside the fortifications of Paris—a cheery, apple-faced little man, with a cheery, apple-faced wife, a buxom daughter of seventeen or eighteen, who promised to be as cheery and apple-faced as her parents, and another daughter married to a tradesman in the village.

M. Blanc was a man of considerable substance. Besides his extensive vineyards he had a large house, forming three sides of a square—one side dwelling-house, the other sides store-rooms, pressing-rooms, and vats, with a courtyard in the middle, and underneath were the cellars where he stored the hogsheads of his own wine.

M. Blanc was a very good specimen of his class. His vineyards and orchards extended far out into the valley. His premises were imposing in extent. When you went to see him, madame would take the ladies of the party upstairs and show them cupboard after cupboard, and press after press, full of household linen and the coloured kerchiefs which the country women always wear instead of hat or bonnet. They only washed—their linen, I mean—once in six months, and their stores were more than enough to last that time. On high days and holidays, when madame wore her silk dress, she displayed on her cap and throat lace that made the Englishwomen pale with envy. When the Mdlles. Blanc married, their father gave them a fortune of two hundred pounds a year each. If you went into M. Blanc's vineyards when the grapes were ripe, or into his orchards when the cherries were ripe, he would urge you to eat your fill; and in the season he was liberal of his asparagus. But if you went out directly after breakfast in the summer you would be very likely to meet M. Blanc and his family coming home for their second breakfast, after having done three or four hours' work with their hands among the vines; and if you went to his house later in the day, you would see him sitting at the corner of a bare deal table eating for dinner a basin of beans, or some such vegetable, with a mass of brown bread and a glass of red wine by his side. On one occasion I went in there with a man who knew him well, and found him discussing just such a dinner, and madame warming some soup on a crackling fire of vine-cuttings. We apologised for disturbing him at his repast, but the

courteous vigneron insisted on our sitting down and having a glass of wine, and in the course of our talk my companion remarked that he wondered how he (Blanc) could work in the way he did without eating meat. Whereupon the good man looked up from his beans and remarked: "Well, I should like some meat, but——" And here a twinkle came into his little, wrinkled eyes, he glanced at his wife, gave a queer little shrug of his shoulders, and philosophically went on with his beans without any further verbal explanation.

To see M. Blanc in his glory, however, you must be in his neighbourhood at the time of the vintage. For a fortnight or three weeks previously, you would probably have had frequent presents of grapes left by M. or Madame Blanc, as they came back from their work; but in order to get these ripe bunches, you would have had to search for some little time among the vines. Gradually, however, you would see the purple tint spreading through all the grapes, and, as this colour became general, you might notice the arrival in the village of tired and hungry-looking men and women, coming first singly and then in companies. These people are the grape-pickers. They generally know with extraordinary exactness when a particular vineyard will be ready for picking, and arrive often only the day before the ripeness is complete. Sometimes a vagary on the part of the weather will upset their calculations, and, unless they chance upon such good souls as the Blancs, their case is a hard one, for, as a rule, they are penniless when they arrive, and their very lean condition is still further reduced before they begin work. At last, however, the great day arrives, the word is given, and good times begin for the grape-pickers.

A French vineyard is not in itself a picturesque sight. Walking through it, you can see little more than the vines immediately round you, for they cannot grow above their supporting poles, which are all about six feet high. Standing on a height over them, you seem to be looking over a vast grey sea, for the country is very flat, and you see little but the grey tops of the poles. As the season advances towards the vintage, the white, chalky roads become inches deep in dust. All along the margins of the road the vines are thickly powdered with it, and a foot-passenger comes home looking like a miller. There is nothing very graceful either in the vines or the grapes. The vines are

immature hop-vines, and the grapes are very small, and grow so closely together that the best way of eating them is to take a bite out of a bunch as you would out of an apple—if your teeth are good enough. It is true you have to take your chance of coming across snails, and slugs, and such small deer; but the snails are the white edible variety, such as you may see in the restaurants, and the slugs have, at all events, been nourished on the vine.

The picturesqueness of the vineyard begins with the picking. If you live near the road to the vineyard, you are awakened at dawn by the sound of cart-wheels and the jingling of the horses' bells; probably, also, by the shouting and singing of the pickers, for no doubt old Blanc has given them supper overnight, and their coffee before they start in the morning, and they are elated at the beginning of the work.

The carts are two-wheeled machines with long bodies. In them stand open tubs. They are drawn up in the road near where the master intends to begin operations. The hands are then divided into two parties—the pickers and the carriers. The pickers, generally women, are provided with hand-baskets, and the carriers with panniers, which they carry on their backs in the way universal with French peasants. As the pickers strip the vines, and fill their baskets with grapes, the carriers come round and collect them in their panniers, which in their turn are emptied into the tubs in the cart. The picking for the first day or so is slow, for everyone is allowed to eat as much as he or she likes, and the people, having generally been on short commons for some time before, show no disposition to neglect their opportunities. Many of them will eat twenty pounds a day, and they fatten visibly day by day under the treatment. When the tubs are full they are driven down to the vigneron's house, and emptied into the vat. And so the work goes steadily on from sunrise to sunset. About mid-day a halt is called; all hands assemble in some convenient spot—generally under the lee of the carts, for other shade is hard to find—and bread and cheese is served out: loaves a yard or so long, and great flat, round cheeses that look very tempting. They seem to be good, too, by the way the men put them away, in spite of all the grapes they have eaten. There is an unwonted appearance of plenty to which they are unaccustomed, and their faces beam with satisfaction. In the evening, when it

becomes dark, the party, sunburnt and tired out, return to the village. Madame, who has come back a little while beforehand, has a steaming mess of meat and vegetables, which is served out to the hands with great hunks of bread—a much better dinner than she and her husband allow themselves at other times.

M. and Madame Blanc celebrated the completion of one vintage by dining with us. Madame arrived in her silk gown of state, her gold chain round her neck, and her lace high-crowned cap on her head. Monsieur had on his Sunday boots, and his black Sunday trousers, and a shirt of dazzling whiteness, with a collar of dangerous stiffness and height. He was shaved, too, and scrubbed till he shone like a lady pippin, but over his white shirt the sensible man had put a clean blue blouse.

There had evidently been a family discussion on the subject, for as madame came into the drawing-room, before she had saluted anyone, she pointed at her entertainers, and turning at her husband, exclaimed:

"Ah, I told you so; I told you they would make a toilette. Go home at once and put on your coat."

In vain was all remonstrance on our part. Madame hauled an enormous key out of her pocket, and monsieur had to take it and go home and put on his black cloth coat of state, in which he eventually returned, looking, and evidently feeling, like a hog in armour.

It was a terrible garment, that coat; it pinched him at every joint, he was conscious of it whenever he moved. Several times he was on the point of taking it off, and was only restrained by his wife's fierce looks and nods. It quite spoilt his evening; he couldn't relax or enjoy himself till the ladies had left the room, and he was allowed to put himself at ease for a while. Madame, however, had come to enjoy herself, and she did so with a whole heart. As a preparation she pinned back her lace sleeves, and turned the skirt of her silk dress inside out, and set to work in a business-like way. As each dish came in she clapped her hands and laughed like a child.

"Ah, v'la le gros bête!" she exclaimed, as a turkey-poult made its appearance, and then proceeded to make what was evidently a traditional joke about its want of clothing, and when she and her husband took their departure with their cheery "Ben swear, maisieu 'm'dame," there was no reason to

doubt her assertion that she had very much enjoyed her dinner.

Some time after this dinner I attended a much greater feast given by M. and Madame Blanc in honour of the marriage of Mdlle. Blanc to the son of a neighbouring vigneron.

There was no half-heartedness in their hospitality. The ceremony, with its attendant formalities, lasted all day, and the invited guests were expected to "assist" at the whole of it. At half-past ten we paraded in M. Blanc's courtyard. Monsieur had spent the morning among his wine-casks, and was now changing his blouse for the black cloth suit of ceremony. He informed us of the fact himself from the window of his bedroom, adding that he would soon be down, and giving directions to some of his friends who had already assembled to take care of us. Soon after this, madame made a similar announcement as to her own toilette, and invited the ladies to give their help and advice towards its completion. Madame, they afterwards reported, only required some finishing touches to her laces. The bride was under the hands of the village hair-dresser, who had previously operated on her father's beard; but when this ceremony was completed their services were requisitioned to get the lady's gloves on. The glove-maker had not, in stock, any gloves made for the hands of a lady who had spent fourteen of her twenty-one years of existence in hoeing vineyards. She had, therefore, to take the ready-made article, and the English ladies came out of her room looking hot and exhausted with the labour of getting the bride into them. It required both patience and physical exertion. One of them took the bride round the waist and pressed her forward, while the other kneaded the gloves on to the damsel's fair fingers. The kid was sound, and stood the strain put upon it, but all through that hot day the poor bride held her hands as if they were suffering from the nip of frost.

While this operation was going on upstairs I was being entertained by my deputy hosts below. Their idea of entertainment was tobacco and drink in the state-chamber. I was accordingly conducted there, given a seat on the state sofa, and made to join several excellent old gentlemen in the consumption of very bad tobacco. When I declined the red wine they offered me, brandy was produced—there was no escaping their disguised kindness in one form or another. My only consolation was that there were

others suffering a worse infliction; for when I got into the fresh air again, the babel of sound that came from the bride's room seemed to me worse than the dense atmosphere of tobacco-smoke I had come from. A room full of the chatter of women who spend their days in the fields is an experience not lightly to be encountered.

When I came out into the courtyard, it had a very bright appearance. The guests had assembled to the number of about a hundred. Black cloth seems to be the holiday-dress of the working population of all countries. It certainly was so with the male guests on this occasion.

The ladies, however, were resplendent. Each of them wore a silk dress, in nearly every case, I believe, their own wedding-dresses, a high-crowned lace cap, and lace over their bosoms; and I am credibly informed that this lace was very beautiful. Each one also wore a gold chain, a gold watch, a bracelet, and a brooch, which the bridegroom always gives to his bride on the wedding-day.

I was surveying this scene, and trying to catch the meaning of the clipped words my friends were launching at me from all sides, when I was interrupted by a softer voice than usual, saying:

"Pardon, m'sieu'," and before I could fairly turn round, I received a salute on my cheek from the bride.

Before I could think of a pretty compliment and turn it into French, the lady had passed on—and, indeed, as she had to kiss some fifty men, there was no time to be lost. Fortunately for me I was among the first of them. On looking round I was amused to see that the bridegroom had paid my wife the same courtesy, mere I think to her astonishment than satisfaction.

When this ceremony was over we were marshalled in pairs, the bride and her father leading the procession, and marched to the Mairie, where the civil contract was ratified. That over, we marched in the same order to the church to receive the nuptial benediction, after which we had the advantage of an address from the curé, in the course of which he informed the newly-married pair that, rightly considered, marriage was an "avant goût de ciel." How he gained his experience he did not say.

On leaving the church we found a band of music awaiting us, and, preceded by it, we marched to a restaurant in the village, where the wedding-breakfast was served. Arrived there, the bride took up her position at the doorway of the courtyard, and



received the congratulations of her friends as they filed past her to an upstairs room where the wedding-feast was to be held.

Before it was served, however, we had an hour to wait—a very grievous hour. Most of the party had probably breakfasted somewhere about daybreak, and from then till two o'clock was a long time to wait. Too long for many of the guests, the bride and bridegroom among the number, for I saw them in an adjoining room having a preparatory basin of soup.

At last the "repas" was announced, and we were marshalled to a room where a hundred places were laid at tables resplendent with all the resources of the confectioner's art. Before we sat down, however, preparations had to be made. Such a feast as this was a serious business, and we had our suits of state on. These suits, in the case of the men, restricted the movements of their arms, and in the case of the women might suffer damage from incautious management of their viands. The men, therefore, took off their coats and sat down in their shirt-sleeves; the ladies contented themselves with turning the skirts of their dresses inside out, and pinning their lace-sleeves up to their elbows; and then, prepared for the fray, we sat down, the ladies on one side, and the men on the other, the space between the bride and bridegroom being filled by two enormous sugar-candy peacocks standing head to head.

The large number of guests severely taxed the resources of the restaurant, and we had to wait a considerable time between the different dishes; but we had come there for serious enjoyment, and were not to be put out by any such small matter as that. Whenever we were tired of waiting we got up and strolled about the room, and so returned to our places with a fresh appetite. It also had the advantage that the cook was thus able to do full justice to the dish in hand, which consequently came up frizzling hot. The beaming faces of content and enjoyment all down the table, too, were worth seeing, but even the pleasure of that failed somewhat before the end of the four hours during which the banquet lasted. During the first part of the dinner the ordinary wine of the country was drunk, but after some time—during a pause between two courses—champagne was handed round. Thereupon the bride and bridegroom rose from their places and went down the whole length of the room, clinking their glasses, the bride with the men,

the bridegroom with the women. Later on Madeira was handed, and the same ceremony was gone through by the parents of the newly-married pair. Again the tedium of one of the long pauses was relieved by the disappearance from his place of a small nephew of the bride. Presently he reappeared by her side, and when she lifted him up he displayed in triumph a huge bunch of coloured ribbons—presumably the bride's garter. With this he was led off by the bridesmaids, who cut it up into rosettes and distributed it to the guests.

Everything has an end, and at last, about six o'clock, we finished our dinner and went outside to smoke, take snuff, or amuse ourselves in any other way that occurred to us—all except the parents of the bride and bridegroom, who stayed behind to pack up the remnants of the feast in handkerchiefs for conveyance to their own houses.

The dinner had cost them eighty pounds we were told, and indeed it could hardly have been done for less; but for that, it seems, they bought it outright, and were entitled to take away with them what was not eaten.

After dinner the procession was reformed, and, headed by the band, went for a walk through the village and into the country, returning to the restaurant for the ball, which began at ten and went on till four in the morning. The next three days were spent by the newly-married couple and their relations in promenading the neighbourhood, and paying and receiving visits, and the evenings in dancing; and on the morning of the fourth day, if you had been up a little after sunrise, you might have seen the happy pair going off to their vineyards, the bride in her grey woollen dress and head-kerchief, and her husband in a blue-linen suit.

Not very long after their marriage hard times came upon France, and this village was the head-quarters of a German army corps.

I had heard now and then of the Blancs, and was glad to learn that they, personally, had not shared in the misfortunes of their country. The Germans paid honestly, and these good people found in them a ready market for their commodities.

Some years after the peace, being in Paris, with time on my hands, I went down to see my old friends.

Except that the village had grown, and that the new church, which was in process

of building when I last saw it, was now finished, nothing was altered. It seemed incredible that a hostile army should have been in occupation of the place; even a little wooden hovel that I remembered still remained untouched.

I made my way down to M. Blanc's house and found madame in the courtyard. Finding she looked at me with some appearance of antagonism, I told her who I was, adding that I was afraid she had forgotten me, to which she bluntly responded that she had—what did I want? In vain did I tell her that all I had come for was to enquire after her health and shake her by the hand. "I couldn't have come for that," she said, "I must have some business. Did I want to buy some wine?"

At last a woman with grizzled hair, whom I with some difficulty identified as the ruddy-faced bride, who was sorting figs in a shed at the other side of the courtyard, called out, "Don't you see, mother, it's M. —?"

"And who is M. —?" was the answer the old lady vouchsafed.

"It must be a long time since we had the pleasure of seeing you, sir," said the daughter, seeking to soften the effect of her mother's manner.

I agreed that it was, and mentioned the number of years that had elapsed.

"Ugh!" said Madame Blanc; "why, that was before the war!" And with that she turned on her heel, and would have nothing more to say to me.

The war seemed to have obliterated from her mind all that had gone before. Why it was so I didn't make out. She hadn't suffered at all; indeed, it had been a source of great profit to her and her family; but it evidently seemed to her to be absurd that a man should come to her to talk of what had occurred before "the war."

On leaving the Maison Blanc, I went down to inspect the church, and, finding the curé there, I complimented him on the fine building that had been completed since my last visit. He accepted my compliment graciously, and showed me all there was to see in the church, afterwards taking me outside and pointing out the place where a round-shot had gone through the west window, and the bullet-marks spattered all over the walls.

"But the Germans didn't do that," he hastened to explain; "the Germans had nothing to do with it; that was all the work of the Communists."

When I came to consider what "the war" meant to these people—what a series of horrors their primitive lives had encountered during that winter, I no longer wondered that such fierce emotions had made hazy in the old peasant's mind all that had gone before it.

## THE PHANTOM FIDDLER OF BEERAGH LODGE.

### A STORY.

My uncle, Mr. Sommerton, was agent to the eccentric Lord Beeragh, and, during his life, resided in Beeragh Castle, a magnificent old mansion, overlooking Beeragh lake, far away in the wilds of West Connaught. When Lord Beeragh died, uncle quitted the castle, taking up his abode in Beeragh Lodge, a much smaller residence on the opposite shore of the lake.

It was a very curious house. Built in what had been a vast quarry, the front apartments and entrance-hall towered high above the humbler portion inhabited by uncle and aunt.

The larger reception-rooms were seldom used. They were fitted up in a style of old-world grandeur, which did not at all agree with uncle and aunt's quiet ways. Over these fine rooms arose a most curious erection—a vast saloon extending from end to end of the building, almost altogether composed of glass; a huge cupola towering in the centre of the roof, catching every ray of light from all quarters of the sky.

Once this curious apartment had been gorgeous with paint and gilding, but the gold was tarnished, the brilliant colours were faded to poor stains.

The windows opened upon a wide balcony, which overlooked the most superb view I ever beheld.

The only means of approach to this strange structure was up a flight of steps outside the house. Few people seemed to care for disturbing its unbroken solitude.

It was winter time, and the house full of merry young people, and, as the rooms in daily use were too small to contain us all, uncle, with a reluctance I was slow to comprehend, granted us permission to use the larger apartments.

Despite their splendour, they were grim and gloomy, but we were all young and gay in those days, and we filled them with merry laughter and joyous music from early morning until long after midnight. But with one consent we all avoided the library, because of a picture which hung

there. It was a magnificent portrait of the last Baron Beeragh, uncle to the first Earl, and great-grand-uncle to the present owner of the title. He must have been a man of singular personal beauty, but with an expression so peculiar that I could not bear to look at his painted semblance on the library wall. Certainly I have never seen a picture which possessed the same influence over me. I never went into that room, if I could by any means avoid doing so.

The winter was one of unexampled severity, but we young folks rejoiced over the delightful sport offered by the far-stretching frozen lake, and our whole days—and, indeed, sometimes a few hours of the lovely moonlit nights—were spent on its smooth glittering surface. One night we had an open-air dance, and it was upon our return home from it that the first of the unaccountable things which took place at the lodge occurred.

My brother Walter and I were the last to leave the lake. As we emerged from the thick fir-woods which separated the house from the water's edge, we paused. The sight which met our startled view arrested our steps, and held us spellbound.

The wide windows of the saloon were all ablaze with unearthly light—not the red glare of fire, but a hard, clear radiance like the electric light of to-day, the glass cupola glowing white against the darkness beyond. Walter threw his arm around me, and for a breathless moment or two we stood terror-stricken. Then, just as a lightning-flash leaps into darkness, and is gone, the weird illumination vanished, and the house lay black against the starlit sky. I scarcely remember anything more until I found myself in my own room. I had not the spirit to join the merry party at supper. Tired out and greatly puzzled as to the reason of what I had seen, I went to bed. Being young and very tired, I soon forgot it, and fell asleep.

When I awoke my fire had burned low. Outside, through the profound windless hush of a night of intense frost, I heard a clock strike. As the sound died on the still night air another took its place. I started up and listened. Softly, clearly through the deathlike silence stole a sound of music. At first a faint, far-off trill like the song of a lark high in the heavens; then coming nearer, growing louder and louder, as if close at hand. It was exquisitely sweet and plaintive, and thrilled me from head to foot. I could not distinguish anything like an air. The only

thing to which I could compare the sound was a sweet jangle of birds' songs on a spring morning. I sat up in bed to listen, there was something so weird and unearthly in the music. What could it mean? Which of uncle's guests was so devoted to violin-playing as to wander about the house practising intricate exercises at the dead of night, and with the thermometer ten degrees below zero? And then, did any of them possess so complete a mastery over that most difficult of instruments? There were wild cadences, runs, shakes, trills, which only a skilled performer could accomplish. As if the unknown violin-player knew of the one listener to his wild harmonies, the music seemed to pause over my head, glide past my window, and sink lower, lower, until at last it reached my ears dulled and muffled from the lower rooms; then it ceased.

The house was astir before I slept.

"Which of you gentlemen serenaded us last night?" asked Ethel Saunderson, one of our guests, at breakfast next morning.

Aunt looked up, a scared, pained expression on her face. Uncle left the table.

Ethel saw something was amiss; she said no more.

As we separated after breakfast, aunt touched my arm.

"Come to my room," she said.

I followed her.

"Don't say anything about—about the noise you heard—the—the wind make through the lattice-work of the balcony last night," she said. "Ethel heard it, and I saw by your face you heard it, too. Your uncle does not like to hear it spoken of."

"The wind, Aunt Alice?" I cried. "Why, there was not a breath of air; and what I heard was a violin most beautifully played."

"I will not argue with you, child," aunt said. "All I ask of you is not to speak of it before your uncle. He does not care to hear it spoken about."

"Won't you tell me why I am not to mention it?" I asked eagerly.

"No," she said decidedly. "I never asked your uncle his reasons for any injunction he lays upon me; and I expect the same from you."

So she left me, much puzzled and a little indignant.

Aunt's boudoir was on the bedroom corridor, therefore, as I stood at the top of the V-staircase in the centre of the house,

I was on a level with the hall. As I quitted her room I saw the slender figure of a man in a dark dress cross the wide hall from the library to the drawing-room.

At the same moment my youngest brother, Hugh, and Tom Saunderson entered the hall.

I ran down one flight of stairs and up the other to meet them.

"Hugh—Hugh, who was it that went into the drawing-room this moment?" I cried.

"Why, no one," Hugh answered. "All the men are down on the ice—Tom and I came back to find out what was keeping you girls."

"But," I insisted, "someone—some man went into the drawing-room as you came through the door. You must have noticed him, unless you were blind."

"I saw no one," Tom Saunderson said.

"Nor I," Hugh responded.

"I must see," I cried. And, followed by the young men, I dashed into the big, chill room.

Now, they say—those two boys—that I must have been dreaming while it was broad daylight; but, so surely as I saw anything in that room—the fire on the hearth, the frosty sunlight streaming into the conservatory—I saw a man in a peculiar dress, with a violin in his hand, standing beside the grand piano.

As I ran into the room, his eyes met mine with a look which seemed most strangely familiar. The finely-cut features were deathly pale. The hand which held the violin with a practised clasp, gleamed white and shining from the ruffle which fell over the wrist.

For one breathless second it stood still, then bowed low, and then drew back into the conservatory.

I reeled round, and would have fallen. Hugh caught me.

"Well, you are a queer girl!" he cried. "You look as if you had seen——"

"Oh, hush—hush!" I gasped out. "It hears you! Look, it has turned! Oh, Hugh, don't let Tom follow!"

For Tom Saunderson had run into the conservatory, and was close to the figure, which I saw plainly moving amongst the flowers towards the door leading to the steps.

"Call him back! Tell him not to follow it!" I pleaded.

"Follow what?" Hugh asked almost angrily. "You are dreaming, Annie."

"No, no, no! See!" I cried. "He has just passed out of the door. He is going up the steps. Oh, Tom, come back—come back!"

Dark against the red winter sunshine, I saw the slender figure slowly mount the crazy steps, and disappear. With my hand grasping Hugh's arm, I tottered into the conservatory, and reached the outer door. It was locked.

"Why, Annie, you have taken leave of your senses," Hugh cried as I looked helplessly into his face, with my hand upon the lock; "your young man must have been a very slender individual indeed to escape through the keyhole—ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't laugh!" I exclaimed. "I tell you I saw him as plainly as I see you this moment. I know it was something unnatural."

"Was it a ghost?" Tom Saunderson asked laughingly; "if so, he has broken through all ghostly traditions. I thought ghosts never rambled about in daylight. But come, Annie, get your hat on; we are losing time."

I did not go on the ice that day; utterly unnerved, I remained in aunt's room, hoping to have an opportunity of telling her what I had seen, and of forcing from her the legend of the house.

That night Lord Beeragh and his young sisters—who had heard of our gay doings and must needs join in them—were to be aunt's guests.

The three young people were to be housed for the night. Ethel and I gave up our rooms, and packed into aunt's boudoir for the nonce. The excitement of their arrival, the business of preparing for the dance, drove away the effects of my terror of the morning, and, by the time we all assembled in the library before dinner, I was quite myself again. I was standing by the mantelshelf talking to Lady Hester Fitzmaurice when the great double-doors of the room opened, and a tall, slender figure entered. My heart stood still. It was the figure I had seen in the morning. The same clear-cut, delicately-beautiful features, the same air of gracious dignity, only the dress was the simple evening-dress of all the other men in the room. I saw Lady Hester look curiously at me.

"Do you not know my brother?" she said. "Beeragh, this is Miss May—Mrs. Sommerton's niece."

The touch of his friendly hand, the sound of his pleasant voice, brought back

my wandering wits; I managed to say something about the lake and the skating, and then we all went to dinner. By the time dinner was half over, Lord Beeragh and I were fast friends.

"By the way," he said, sinking his voice, "where is the wonderful picture of my ancestor of unhallowed memory, of which I have heard?"

I told him there was a picture of a Lord Beeragh in the library, but that I did not know there was any special story about it.

"Oh yes," he said; "there was a bad lord amongst us, who was supposed to have dealings with the unseen world. I think the truth about him would probably be that he was eccentric and ahead of his age. He built this house. A queer erection, isn't it? He did it for a purpose—he wanted a good music-room. The only unaccountable thing about him was the manner of his departure from life, I cannot say his death, for of that no one ever had certain proofs. He simply disappeared, leaving his house full of guests, and on the eve of a great national crisis, when his party were looking to him for help and guidance. He was quite a young man, an advanced Nationalist—despite his uncanny reputation, a man of vast personal influence. It seemed an unaccountable thing that he should vanish as he did."

"Was no effort made to discover any trace of his fate?" I enquired.

"Oh yes. My grand-uncle, who died a short time ago, made every enquiry, but to no purpose. There were various surmises. One of the most romantic, but I am inclined to think the most probable, was that he was mixed up with some of the numerous secret societies of Southern Europe, and that he fell into the hands of the Inquisition, either in Italy or Spain. As to his departing mysteriously and leaving his house full of guests, I regard that as altogether apocryphal. Something like the sequel of the story which you doubtless have heard."

I told him eagerly that I knew of no story at all connected with his family.

"Is it possible you have not heard of the Phantom Fiddler, who plays upon the great balcony three times a year? As this is one of his appointed seasons, I wonder he has not favoured you."

Then, breathlessly, I told him what I had heard the previous night, and what I had seen that morning, imploring him to enlighten me as to the legend connected with the house.

With an altered look upon his face, he told me, speaking very low, so that his words reached my ears alone:

"This house has always had the reputation of being haunted by an appearance resembling Lord Beeragh. What you tell me gives a strange confirmation to the popular superstition. An accomplished musician, it was his habit to walk round that balcony outside the music-room he had erected, practising new and strange feats upon his violin. I must tell you there was an organ in that room—how they contrived to build it there who can tell? But, actually, about forty years ago, Lord Beeragh was obliged to have it taken down. No one would inhabit the house from the eerie music which sounded continually from that room. Of course it was a trick. You shake your head? I am sceptical about such matters, you see; but I will tell you the tale as 'twas told to me. They say the windows blaze with light, just as they used to flare when he and his friends held high festivity in that airy room; that, one by one, the guests depart; and then the spectre fiddler comes out of one particular window and plays, walking round and round the balcony he loved during his life; and they say that certain penalties follow the hearing of that unearthly music. Must you go? Remember the first round dance."

"Has Beeragh been talking to you about the bad lord?" Lady Eileen asked me as we passed from the dining-room to the drawing-room. "Was that the picture in the library? Do come and show it to me; I have never seen it."

We went into the great, dimly-lit room. A cold sense of a presence there beyond our own two young individualities struck chill to my heart as I crossed the threshold, but Lady Eileen did not seem to feel it. She moved gaily through the empty room, and stood fronting the strange picture.

"Why, it is the image of Beeragh," she cried, "only Beeragh has not such a dreadful expression. It is a wonderful picture, certainly, but is there not something very odd about it?"

We stood looking at the portrait for a few moments. Then Lady Eileen clasped her hands before her face.

"Oh, come away—come away! It is horrible—it is like a living thing!" she cried. "Did you not fancy the eyes glared at us, and the lips moved? Oh, do come away!"

It may only have been an effect from the

shadows cast by the flickering firelight, or only our overwrought girlish imaginations, but we both saw, or fancied we saw, the eyes flash, and the red, thin lips curve at us in a smile of deadly malice.

We clutched each other, and fled.

As we left the room, we were followed by a low, mocking laugh.

It was some time before either of us recovered from the effects of our fright.

When Lord Beeragh appeared, and his sister told him our strange experience, he needs must have me show him the library and the mysterious picture; but seeing how I shrank back, terrified at the bare idea of returning to the room, he did not insist upon carrying out his intention.

Then we began to dance.

The great room had been partially cleared of furniture, and made a capital ballroom. We had a large gathering. Not only our house-party, but every available young person in the county who could be induced to brave the intense frost and the slippery state of the roads, was present, and the mirth and the dancing were fast and furious.

I had been dancing with half the men in the room, and about midnight I was waltzing for the third or fourth time with Lord Beeragh. We had been flying round the room, and had paused for a moment's breathing-space at the door of the conservatory. He was saying something—no matter what—which caused me to look up into his face.

Just behind him, looking at me with cruel, mocking eyes over his shoulder, only separated from the light, and warmth, and life of the gay ballroom by the glass door, stood the mysterious figure I had seen in the morning.

The likeness between the two faces—the Earl's full of life, young hope, joy, and manly beauty; the other such a ghastly travesty of it, with the livid pallor on the cheeks, the hard, cold glitter in the eyes—it was horrible! Most horrible!

I clutched Lord Beeragh's arm.

He looked down at me with a tender smile, which changed to an expression of unbounded surprise.

"What is it? What has alarmed you?" he asked.

I could only point, breathless, to the dark figure, the ghastly face, the glittering eyes behind him.

"Do you not see?" I gasped out.

He turned and looked.

"No," he said. "There is nothing to

alarm you so. You are unnerved, overstrung. Come with me."

He took my hand to draw it through his arm. And then his whole visage changed, his eyes dilated, the healthy colour forsook his cheek.

"Great Heavens! what is it? Who is it?" he cried, and dashed open the door.

If any of those who were present that night remain alive—and there must be many of them left, for there were fifty or sixty people in the room—if they choose to speak, they can substantiate what I tell, for everyone in the room heard what happened, although only Lord Beeragh, Walter, and I saw that unearthly figure.

Just as in the picture—just as I had seen it in the morning. It held a violin in its hand. We saw it raise the instrument to its shoulder.

We stood spellbound.

Low and clear rang the long-drawn delicate notes, so low, so soft, that their sound did not reach the ears of the dancing throng within. But then burst upon their startled ears a wild whirl of diabolic harmony, volleying out like flame amongst them, drowning the music within, checking the flying feet of the dancers, curdling their blood, with such a crash of devilish, unearthly melody as I hope and pray never may reach my ears again.

There was a breathless pause in the drawing-room. Everyone stood still, too terrified to move. For me I saw nothing but that awful form standing there amongst the bright blossoms; the face turned towards us with a look of such malignant triumph that it froze my blood; the upraised arm sending the bow flying across the strings of the instrument with such demoniac power.

But I was conscious of a stronger will than my own supporting me, helping me to bear the terror which otherwise would have crushed me. I felt a firm hand clasp mine, a steadfast arm sustaining me, the warm pulsations of a brave heart beating close to my own. I knew I was safe. Then I heard uncle's voice. I saw him stride into the conservatory; saw that form face him, glide past him, stand upright in the doorway with its cruel, fiendish smile, and eyes of lurid flame. Then it seemed to melt off into nothing. I can find no other words to describe the manner of its disappearance, and still louder, fiercer, that weird, awful music rang through the room.

Uncle staggered out of the conservatory.

Great beads of perspiration stood on his brow; his features were distorted with rage.

"A hundred pounds to anyone who will help me to detect this trick," he shouted.

The unearthly sound ceased, and wild and shrill through the room rang, as if in defiant reply, a laugh so terrible, so demoniac, that—I remember no more.

I was lying on my improvised bed in aunt's room when my senses cleared. Aunt and Lady Eileen were bending over me; and Lord Beeragh, who had borne me to this haven of rest, was standing at the door.

I cannot tell what took place that night. I remember confused noises as of hurrying feet tramping round the house. I remember sounds of voices high overhead, and flaring of torches everywhere. I seemed to know, in some curious, intuitive fashion, that the guests were gone, and that the police from the neighbouring towns were searching high and low for the perpetrators of what uncle insisted was a silly trick.

Next morning, almost at daybreak, I returned with Lord Beeragh and his sisters to the castle. Twenty-four hours afterwards I was raging in brain-fever.

They said it was that awful experience which laid me low.

For many days I was unconscious, Aunt Alice nursing me with all a mother's tender care, and it was during my severe illness that Beeragh Lodge gave up its terrible secret. Yet only in part, for the dark mystery which surrounds the awful discovery made in that fated house never can be cleared away.

Lord Beeragh insisted upon the lodge being examined under his own eye. He said the house must be taken down if no other means of discovering the secrets it contained could be found, and, room by room, they did search it mercilessly.

First, the great saloon was dismantled and taken down with no result, then the drawing-room was pulled to pieces, the hall, the dining-room. Last of all they came to the library.

Behind that terrible picture they found a great livid splotch upon the wall, and when the panelling was removed they found—a mummified form. Those who were present and saw that unhallowed tomb give

up its terrible secret never forgot the sight. Few, alas! survived it long. There stood that awful, silent witness to a hideous crime. They said its eyes glared at them, that its shrivelled lips were contorted into a demoniac grin. It was attired in the full court-dress of a bygone generation, a gold-hilted rapier was at its side. At its feet lay some fragments of various-coloured woods; in its hand hung a broken bow.

There was no mark of violence, so they all said, on the corpse, only there it stood, closed up into that horrible niche, just as it had been shut into it eighty years before. What deed of darkness had been wrought—what foul crime perpetrated, and for what end, never can be known.

Lord Beeragh at once ordered a coffin to be prepared, and, seeing the men held back, he and Uncle Phil endeavoured to remove the ghastly relic of humanity to its final resting-place, but at a touch it crumbled to a heap of dust.

Such poor fragments as they could collect were gathered up, and buried in Beeragh churchyard.

And now for the sad sequel of my tale. Before the year went round there was not a man left to bear the Beeragh title. Ah, it was hard! it was hard! His deep love, his ardent spirit had over-leaped all barriers. In September I was to have been his wife. I bade him good-bye one bright May morning, and watched his little boat go dancing over the sunlit waters of the lough. It was an old story—a sudden squall—a moment's carelessness. At nightfall they bore him home.

For me, death would have been better than life. Oh, how often I have wished that the bad lord's curse had fallen on me, and not on him! But I found duties to fulfil, and I grew not reconciled, but patient. Uncle Phil caught what at first was only a slight cold, but it carried him off, and then Aunt Alice and I lived quietly together until she, too, faded away, and now, a weary, lonely woman, I am waiting,

But when we meet the time will not seem long.

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# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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No. 867. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JULY 11, 1885.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## ONLY A BUSINESS MAN.

By MAY DRYDEN.

### CHAPTER XIX.

I LONG for peace.  
Ah me, I am so tired!  
I do so want to rest.  
If life might cease,

If never more my bosom might be fired  
By passion and by sin,  
Perhaps some good work might in me begin;  
But Lord Thou knowest best.

I am so weary now!  
All the day long I have been fighting, fighting.  
Now giving way, and in my sin delighting;  
Now trying hard to deal one manly blow,  
And slay my foe.

I am not strong enough to fight alone,  
And yet too blind to see my Father's hand;  
I cannot feel His arm around me thrown.

My knees are weak, longer I cannot stand.  
Oh, Father! take me home, and give me rest,  
Or teach me still to say, "Thou knowest best."

Let me rest, Father!  
Just a little while  
Oh, let me rest! Or rather

For one short breathing-space upon me smile.  
Then when the spirit in me waxes strong,  
I will be brave again. It is so long  
Since peace in my torn bosom was a guest.  
But if I still must fight, "Thou knowest best."

Dick read his verses over once or twice, and then shook his head and sighed.

"Yes," said he to himself; "that is poor Gordon all over. And now the question is, what on earth am I going to do about it? I should like to take Everett Fenchurch, and give him a thorough good ducking, and I would, too, if I thought it would do poor old Gordon any good. He will have a brain-fever or something if he goes on like this. Why, it's enough to make a baby of a fellow to look at him sometimes. He has not a scrap of comfort except in Clarence, and she, poor child! is far too much like him to brace him up at all. This parson-lord of theirs is making a regular heathen of him, too. It is too bad

the poor fellow should have no peace even in his religion. I have it!"

With a gleam of satisfaction on his face, Dick put his verses in his pocket and his hat on his head, and left the house. He had been a fortnight with his cousins now, and was quite domesticated, going to and fro as he would, visiting the mill, and making friends with the hands in their own homes.

Sometimes he disappeared for a whole day together. Sometimes he shut himself up in his bedroom and wrote from morning until night. But when he was with his cousins, he never failed in his easy, courteous good-temper. He asked no questions, and, indeed, that was not necessary, for Gordon was always of a very communicative nature. Dick, on the contrary, rarely volunteered information about himself, though he did not withhold it when asked for.

Now he walked briskly away from Wilton in a southerly direction, passing on his way through a long lane with little cottages all down one side. At one of these he stopped and knocked, and being answered by a gruff, "Come in!" lifted the latch and entered.

The room was just the usual Lancashire workman's sitting, or rather living room—that room which is characteristic of the county and yet rarely fails to have peculiarities which render it characteristic of the individual also. There was a wide fireplace to the right hand of the door, a high oaken mantelshelf surmounting the brightly-blacked kitchen-range. A projecting partition hid it from the door, being just large enough to shelter from all possible draught a big wooden chair with a patch-work cushion in it. On the other side of the fireplace, and between it and a second door which led to the back of the cottage,

was an immense settle or sofa, chintz-covered and cushioned.

Opposite to the fireplace was a large and beautifully-polished mahogany sideboard or chest-of-drawers, or, rather, a combination of the two, the numerous brass handles of which made, by their reflection of the glowing fire, so many spots of light in the rather dark room; for you will never see a Lancashire living-room without a fire even in the warmest weather. Our Lancashire lads and lasses love heat, probably because so many of them carry on their daily business in a temperature abnormally high; and people who live in a coal-district are not wont to economise fuel.

The mahogany corner-cupboard and the tall eight-day clock, the brass dogs and candlesticks on the mantelpiece, were other of the ordinary features of such a dwelling-room. So, too, was the sampler on the wall, worked in coloured threads, and framed and glazed, which, beneath three verses of one of Watts's hymns, set forth how the above was the work of one Jamima Ann Cook, the whole being surrounded by a border of impossible birds and flowers.

The special characteristics of this room were three clocks over and above the tall one opposite the corner-cupboard, a barometer, two or three thermometers, and various weather-charts.

As Richard Sanders entered, the mistress of the house came forward from her sewing-machine with a pleasant smile, saying:

"Coom yer ways in an' set ye deawn. Oi'm glad to see thee. Si'thee, man, what'n a fool my measter's been an' made o' himsel'."

"What has he been doing now, Mrs. Bowles?" asked Dick, advancing to the settle, where an elderly man, with grey hair and very strongly-marked features, was lying.

"Doan't you believe nout that she says, Mr. Sanders," said the invalid, with a comical look on his keen, shrewd face. "Oi've gotten a touch o' th' rheumatiz i' my back—that's aw."

"Rheumatiz," said the woman sharply. "Ay, an' ony mon's loike to have rheumatiz 'ut goes out i' a pouring rain at twelve o'clock at neet to mak' eaut th' weather odds."

"Well, you see," said the old man deprecatingly, "oime a bit of a student loike."

"Student!" answered his wife. "A gradely student! Next toime as oi wed it'll noane be a student, but a mon wi'

some mak' o' common-sense i' his yed. Naw, measter, bide still, conno yo? Eh! Oi niver did see sich a mon. Whoi conno' yo' stay put a bit?"

For all her sharp tongue, the woman had a very gentle hand, and adjusted a quilt over her husband's feet with a very loving touch.

"Oi were only goin' to give Mr. Sanders a cheer," said he; "si'thee, he's stonning aw this while."

"Eh, fer sure, so he is! Sit thee deawn, Mr. Sanders, an' niver heed my clacken. My tongue's loike Jacob Black's bicycle—'ut were a deal easier to start nor to stop."

"Have you done anything for your rheumatism, Mr. Bowles?" asked Dick.

"Aye; a friend o' mine gave me some stuff, but it made me mortal sick."

"Let's look at it."

The woman brought the bottle willingly enough; Dick smelt and tasted, and then burst out laughing.

"Why, Mr. Bowles," said he, "it is a mercy you were sick. You might have been poisoned; you should have rubbed this on outside."

"Eh, should he neaw, fur sure?" said the woman admiringly. "Just to think on't! We might have had a crowner's inquest an' the body lyin' eaut at The Blue Bell. Eh, but oi'd niver have shamed to have asked th' minister to a' buried yo', measter."

"Thou'd a had to ask't, my lass. Oi couldna a laid quiet anywhere else but i' th' owd chapel-yard."

"What sort of a man is this minister of yours?" asked Dick suddenly.

Old Bowles was on his guard instantly, but answered civilly:

"He's a better sort o' man than any other man i' this neighbourhood, sir. Theer's but a few o' that sort comes into this world. You know he's a Unitarian?"

"Ah, yes! But that does not make him a good man, you know."

"It goes a long way towards it, onyway," said the man. "It stands to reason it must, you know."

"Why?"

"Whoi? Do you think if oi said to eawr little Sammy, 'Look you heer, mi lad; theaw mun go to schoo', but if thou'st nouty thou mun say thou'st sorry, an' then oi'll noane punish thee—oi'll tak' it eawt o' thy brother,' that he'd be as likely to behave as if oi said, 'Si'thee, Sam, if thou'st noane good to-day thou'll get strap to-neet'?"

"Well, your religion may make a man upright, I admit, but, I fancy, very hard and uncharitable."

"Neaw do go an' talk wi' the minister, sir. You'll not say that again. Eh, it's as good as a sermon on charity to look at his face. Theer's not one o' th' childer but knows him, an' would run a quarter of a mile for a word from him; theer's not one of the folk dare say a word of's neebour but what's koind to th' minister—not even owd Ben Crossley, an' Ben's blessing is no sweeter nor some folks' cursing."

"Ah, well," said Dick, rising, "I must be going. Don't you poison yourself before I come again. Take care of him, Mrs. Bowles. Do not let him study the weather odds in the rain any more. I'll risk it," he added to himself as he left the house; "I'll risk it. If that's the sort of a man he is, I'm right. And old Bowles can see as far into a millstone as most people. I wonder if the parson will try to convert me, and whether he's seen me at chapel these last two Sundays. There is no need to say right out that I need no converting."

Dick followed the lane until it opened out upon a green, on one side of which was an old white farmhouse, smothered in horse-chestnuts, on the other a little inn. Farther on, on the north side of the green, and between it and some fields, stood a little, old-fashioned, square chapel, the only irregularities of which were a projection or recess at one end, containing the organ, and the tiny belfry, with its one old bell. It had a history, that old bell, and the congregation would not have exchanged it for the finest peal in the parish. Had it not been the bell which had summoned the folks to worship in the very first chapel built on that site, in the old, old days, when the congregation was founded by one of the two thousand ministers ejected from the Church for conscience sake?

On one side of the chapel were school-buildings of a much more recent date than itself; on the other, a narrow path led from the chapel-porch to the little old house of the chapel-keeper. The two latter buildings—i.e., the chapel and the house—stood in a graveyard, and the whole was surrounded by a neat iron railing.

Dick regarded it contemplatively for a few minutes, then turned up to the left, and in a few moments found himself in front of the old parsonage, where dwelt the Rev. William Franks, minister of

Lorton Chapel—Lorton Chapel in fact, as well as in name, since, though it was Dissenting, it was the only place of worship in Lorton. Nay, its schools were the only schools in Lorton, and had been so for nearly a hundred years.

Dick gave his name to the servant who opened the door, and was at once shown into the minister's study.

Mr. Franks numbered many clever men amongst his flock, but not one would admit himself so clever as the minister; many wise men, but none who could vie with him in wisdom. Some of his people were tender-hearted and loving, but his life was a lesson in charity and justice to the best of them. A friend and companion to the youthful as well as the old, at sixty years of age he bore in his bosom a heart as young as that of a man of twenty, and as simple and trusting as a child's. Such was the man who, rising as Dick entered the room, removed his spectacles, and, giving him an earnest, scrutinising, but kindly look, bade him be seated.

Dick had a habit of going straight to his point, which often saved him a world of trouble. Now he followed his usual practice.

"I have ventured to trouble you, sir," said he, "because I want a little advice, and I felt sure I might confide in you safely."

"Yes?" said Mr. Franks. "Now, may I ask why?"

"I have been several times to your chapel, sir, and I know quite a number of the people round here."

"Well, if I can help you I will; and, at any rate, you may trust me safely."

For answer, Dick drew his verses from his pocket and handed them to Mr. Franks. The latter put on his spectacles, read the MS. attentively, and then asked:

"Yours?"

"Yes," said Dick; "my composition, but not my state of mind, sir. It is that of a friend, as nearly as I can read him, and I am sure you will admit that it is a bad one. I want to know what to do for him."

"Are you not rather young to interfere in such a case as this?"

"Oh, I'm not so young as I look; I am over twenty-one. Not that I would have meddled, though, had there been anyone else to lend a helping hand."

"Does your friend live in this neighbourhood?"

"Yes—at Wilton. He is my cousin; I



am staying with him. I thought, if I came to see you, you would, perhaps, return my call, and I might introduce you."

"Who is your cousin's own clergyman?"

"Lord Laxton."

"Ah!"

I need not enter into all the particulars of the conversation. Suffice it to say that Dick established a visiting acquaintance for himself with Mr. Franks, and began to cherish hopes of inducing Gordon Fenchurch to try what a change of parsons might do for him.

### THE CROWN DIAMONDS OF FRANCE.

A MYSTERY still hangs around the history of precious stones. The dim uncertainty which veils their origin, and, above all, the utter ignorance in which after four thousand years of research and study the wisest men amongst the human race still remain with regard to the purpose for which they were created, invests them with a weird interest peculiar to themselves. Something like awe is always combined with the astonishment with which we contemplate a specimen of the diamond, and are bidden to express admiration at its beauty and value. Science will tell us that it is nothing more than a compound of silicate, soda, and magnesium; and yet the learned Professor Després, the greatest chemist of our day, spent whole months in manipulating these ingredients without being able to produce a single spark indicative of success in producing the diamond by artificial means. He was so indignant at being baffled in his research, that he was fain to confess to his pupils in the lecture-room that he was almost inclined to agree with a certain learned Hebrew professor who affirms that all precious stones, and the diamond in particular, still belong to the dominion of Satan. "In the beginning," says he, "God created all things upon this earth for the benefit of mankind, but Satan, being driven from his domination over earth's surface, still maintains his hold over all things which lie below. Thus gold and silver have tempted men to infamy, lead and iron to murder and warfare, sulphur and carbon to swift destruction of God's image in the human race. Now, worse than all this—for these hidden substances can but destroy the body—it will be found that every precious gem extracted from the earth has power to destroy the soul, being

invested with a portion of the still unblest soul of the earth itself, where it has lain concealed from the beginning of all time, and is still subjected to the power of the Evil One. The diamond in particular is accounted amongst the surest weapons for wreaking vengeance on the human race, and Satan never fails to make it serve his purpose whenever a fitting opportunity presents itself in the weakness or wickedness of man or woman kind." And surely it would seem as if there were some truth in the assertion, when we turn to the record of the murders, the mutilations, the horrible tortures inflicted by tyrants to obtain possession of the baubles which, save for the false value attributed to them through human vanity, would be found worthless in themselves.

The strange idea expressed by many ancient writers that all precious stones have an especial will of their own, which, when exercised, has been found more powerful than the human will itself, and will bring a blessing or a curse to the possessor according to their own caprice and pleasure, has been encouraged in some degree by the examples which have occurred in the history of France.

The diamond necklace of Marie Antoinette which led to the French Revolution; the diamond seal with which Louis Seize stamped his adherence to the Constitution proposed by the insurgent authorities on that memorable 16th of August, when the King donned the red cap of Liberty; have both disappeared. The necklace was broken up, so it is surmised, and taken to Russia, where it still exists, but concealed by the family to whom it had been entrusted. The seal fell from the King's trembling hand after it had pressed the wax upon the parchment. It rolled upon the carpet and was never found, although the dazzling brilliancy of the diamonds which surrounded the cornelian centre should have rendered it visible enough upon that hot and broiling afternoon, with the August sun streaming through the windows.

The "Regent" diamond has surely brought ill-luck enough to its possessors. They say that Governor Pitt, who acquired it from the Indian native who had murdered the sentinel-priest set to watch the idol whose sacred countenance it had adorned for many generations, had been warned of its evil influence, but would not believe the superstition until he discovered that each time he wore it some dire misfortune was

sure to happen to his family. There be many people in Paris who will persist in attributing the disasters which beset the French Empire to the sinister influence of the jewel. The Empress Eugénie wore it on her forehead at the private banquet given at the Tuileries on the occasion of the Emperor's departure for the frontier. A *ponche d'honneur* was offered to his majesty by the officers of the staff, in imitation of the simple custom observed in the French army when a subaltern is promoted to a higher rank. The ceremony was strictly private—beyond the military officers none but the most intimate friends had been invited—the artist who had done honour to various conspicuous acts of the Emperor's Government, the Oriental savant who had shed lustre on the glories of the opening of the Canal of Suez, the poet who had celebrated the deeds of the Imperial reign, and one or two other celebrities who had attached their fortunes to the Imperial Court. But the Empress, with feminine impulse, willing to do all honour to the enterprise which was to cover the Empire with its crowning glory in the defeat of the Prussian army, had attired herself in full court-dress, a robe of green brocade—the colour of hope, according to French tradition—and had adorned herself with her finest diamonds, amongst which the Regent of course stood prominent. It surmounted the great brilliant eagle on her bosom. The Orientalist gazed upon it with knitted brow and puzzled countenance, trying to remember the Indian legend connected with the gem. He had only recently been studying the meaning of its Hindostani name, disguised as it is by a double signification, and was struck by the idea that it should be called "*L'œil du Diable*"—the Devil's Eye. This was the last time the Regent was ever worn, and it was consigned to its place amongst the state jewels that night, with the anticipation of its being soon required on the Emperor's return.

Yet, notwithstanding all the gloomy traditions connected with the Crown Diamonds of France, they are, it is said, to be put up to auction—to be sold, in short, to the highest bidder. What man will be bold enough to purchase the insignia of royalty, with which have been associated in men's minds through long generations the grandeur and glory of France? Who will dare to bid for the Regent? The very announcement of the sale in the *Moniteur* was received with

indignation by the royalists of every class throughout the country. It seemed like the last farewell to all hoped for restoration of the Court, the first opening of the new era of vulgarity and violence which had so long been dreaded. It had been at first imagined that the advertisement in the *Moniteur* had been put forth as a feeler, merely to ascertain the temper of the people, until the reality of the threat became evident by the public exhibition of the jewels in the *Salle des Etats*, in the Louvre. And, sure enough, there the diamonds were displayed in due array. The species of cage in which they were enclosed was let into the wall, and the recess was hung with violet velvet drapery. This was artistically distributed on three broad shelves covered with the same material, so as to throw back the flame and flash of the gems with a fierceness and brilliancy that no other colour could have power to convey. A glass case enveloped the whole, and, for safety's sake, a row of iron bars prevented the visitor from approaching too near the gorgeous show. The velvet-covered stand on which the jewels reclined was made to sink through a trap-door into the flooring, and at the terrible words, so dreaded of artists in the picture-gallery, when uttered in a stentorian voice by the guardian, "*Messieurs on fer-r-me!*" the whole display vanished as if by magic, the clinking of a second iron grating giving notice of the existence of additional security beneath the floor.

The objects exhibited were comparatively few in number. The most precious of the jewels in the eye of the antiquarian—those which belonged to the ancient Queens of France, and emphatically denominated "*Le Trésor de France*"—were presented by the City of Paris to the Duchess d'Angoulême on her marriage, perhaps by way of compensation for the martyrdom of her parents, and as token of forgiveness of the injuries she had been made to suffer by the donors. The Duchess d'Angoulême never wore them. She sold them at a later period to foreign dealers, and the money was invested in Austrian bonds to constitute a marriage-portion for the Count de Chambord.

Most of the jewels once belonging to Josephine and Marie Louise were reset for the Empress Eugénie, who revived the taste for jewelled ornaments which had lain dormant during the reign of Louis Philippe. And it was the Empress Eugénie who had all the honours of the present collection. The necklaces, principally composed of the gems belonging

to the different orders conferred upon the Great Napoleon by the sycophantic foreign sovereigns of his day, were gracefully arranged in festoons upon the first tier of the show-stand. All those worn at the different state-balls at the Tuileries during the Empire were there, save the one given by the Emperor to his fair bride on the morning of their marriage, in which appeared the famous emeralds bought of Don Pedro as a surprise for the beautiful Eugénie. It was rumoured that this necklace had been subtracted from the collection long before the fall of the Empire, and had remained quietly slumbering in her majesty's jewel-case until it was brought to England, where the emeralds were taken from their setting and sold. Upon the necklace-stand blazed forth the famous diamond girdle which at the time of its appearance set all Paris by the ears, in mad dispute as to the propriety or indiscretion of the publicity given to its manufacture. The design of this tremendous piece of workmanship was furnished by the celebrated actress, Mdlle. Desclauzas, for whom the original was made to wear in the "Biche au Bois," at the Porte St. Martin. It is, perhaps, one of the finest things of the kind ever produced. On the tier above came the eight coronets, of divers fashions, all of them composed of jewels of the first water, and the setting of most finished execution. The legend goes that these coronets were made to wear on each succeeding day during the festivities given on their majesties' progress through the eastern provinces of France. Here also were the various shapes of the queenly crown as worn by the female sovereigns of France, from that worn upon the plaited hair of the good Queen Blanche, to that which adorned the powdered wig of Marie Antoinette.

On the topmost tier of all was laid the famous Regent. All visitors were attracted at once by its magnetic power. It seemed to possess a vitality peculiar to itself—to stare, and sometimes fiercely flash, almost blinding the beholder with its sudden glare. The Regent, beheld sideways, seemed now and then to possess a wondrous expression of malignity—the very realisation of the "Devil's Eye"—too fierce and glittering to be gazed upon; catching the light upon its facets and sending back sparks which appeared to fly all round—upon the floor, and on the ceiling, and the walls—the prismatic brilliancy leaping from one spot to another, according as the sun's rays shot through the lofty casements of the Salle; then, as suddenly, the "Devil's Eye"

would seem to close, as if in weariness, and all was dull with the dulness of the film spread over a blind man's eyes, opaque and white. A passing cloud had gone over the sun, and the lustre was diminished, leaving but the cold, hard light upon its surface.

Many people who remembered the "Eugénie" diamond, bought by Napoleon the Third to be worn as a clasp to the great emerald necklace, were puzzled to find it absent from the collection. They were told that this diamond, which once belonged to the Empress Catherine, who gave it to Prince Potemkin, was bought by the Emperor from one of the Prince's descendants, and paid for out of his own private funds, therefore it could not be considered as belonging to the Crown. This diamond had been purchased as consort to the Regent, in consequence of the strange superstition which tells us that diamonds are apt to wax dim and lose their lustre if left to pine in solitude; so together had they been made to shine, the one at the throat, the other on the bosom or the forehead of the Empress on every great State occasion. This gem was sold in London to the Guicowar of Baroda, who is supposed, by the way, to have disposed of it, no one knows to whom, as all trace of it has disappeared, English visitors to his highness never having beheld it.

So firm is the belief among the people of Paris that the Crown Diamonds will never be parted, that very few persons believe in their dispersion by the auctioneer. It was thought that this public exhibition was only one of the strange adventures to which they have been subjected by fate, that all will come right again one of these days, and that they will be restored to their rank once more as guardians of the outward glory of the throne.

But a stranger adventure than any of those known to the public has befallen the Crown Diamonds of France. It is this adventure which gives some colouring to the idea of the occult power of volition in the diamond, which the will of man has never been able either to direct or suppress.

It was a rare hot day in July when the Revolution of 1830 broke out—so hot, indeed, that every window of the Palace of St. Cloud, where the royal family had for some weeks past been "taking the fresh," as the French call it, was thrown back wide-open to admit the air, and the view of the brilliant ceremony of inspecting

the battalion stationed at St. Cloud by the Duc d'Angoulême would therefore be enjoyed to the full extent by the inmates of the château. The King had remained at the Tuileries, in order to receive a few troublesome counsellors who would insist on disturbing him with their childish fears of the result which might ensue from the rising of the people, which had been anticipated in consequence of the Ordonnances. Any danger to the Government was laughed to scorn, and in spite of all warning from those who knew the temper of the Paris mob, the Court had treated the popular discontent as a mere trifling outburst to be easily quelled by "quelques coups de cravache," for these were the exact words uttered by the Duc d'Angoulême when news reached him that the fighting had begun. He was at the moment in the very act of buckling on his sword to go down to review the troops in the park, and would have thought it quite beneath his dignity to occupy himself with the doings of the canaille.

In the oval-shaped sea-green boudoir overlooking the park, was seated the Duchess d'Angoulême, with a dame d'honneur standing wearily behind her chair. Now and then her royal highness would gaze impatiently at the clock upon the console, and tap impatiently with her foot as if in annoyance. Her eyes would stray over the greensward of the park, where the troops were parading in all their bravery before the Duke, and she would start impatiently as the word of command, uttered in the hoarse military shout of the officer, broke the stillness. The cause of this disturbance of spirit lay in the want of punctuality in the attendance of the painter Dubois-Drahonet, who had been appointed to finish her portrait for the Hotel de Ville at three o'clock, and it was already seven minutes past that time—a negligence of royal commands which would need most serious reprimand. The easel stood ready in one corner of the boudoir—the unfinished picture may still be seen in one of the upper galleries of Versailles. When the quarter struck from the clock, the Duchess began to frown with displeasure. But just then, the door opened suddenly, and the *huissier de service*, pale as death, appeared, and in a trembling voice announced the arrival of the painter. The poor fellow had evidently something more to say, but the habitual respect and fear of royalty kept him silent. There was a scuffling and whispering outside the door

—an unwarranted commotion which made the Duchess frown ominously as she half rose to her feet in deprecation of the strange breach of palace discipline indicated by the sound. The painter himself seemed also to have forgotten all etiquette; he rushed in with hurried step, and made his obeisance without the usual awe-stricken expression—then strode over to his easel, and drawing it aside with a sudden jerk, forgot amid his confusion the usual ceremony of humbly begging permission to move. His countenance was absolutely distorted with alarm, and the perspiration stood in huge drops upon his brow. His toilet was, however, strangely discomposed—his coat shining with wet as though he had been drenched. It was some time before he could collect breath enough to apologise for the delay in his attendance. He had been detained by an accident on the road—had experienced some difficulty in obtaining a vehicle, etc., etc., and all this while labouring under such strong emotion that the haughtiness of the Duchess was softened, and she exclaimed, in that hoarse, gruff, manly voice of hers, meaning to be good-natured: "Why, what in the world has happened to you, monsieur! You must have taken a header"—"piqué une tête" were the words—"in the Seine as you came along!" The nervous excitement of the poor painter was so great that instead of replying and telling the truth, he actually stared fixedly at her royal highness, and burst into tears! The worthy princess could not choose but imagine that this display of sensibility must of a certainty be caused by extreme emotion at having been thus familiarly spoken to by herself, and being in a good-natured frame of mind resulting from her own harmless little joke, made sign to her dame d'honneur to allow the painter time to compose himself, and turned once more to the balcony to look down upon the park, where the Duke was still watching the manœuvring and marching of the battalion of St. Cloud. Not a soul in the whole of that vast palace would have dared to tell her royal highness, that the painter had been compelled to get his coat thoroughly washed and spunged from the blood and brains of the soldier who had been shot dead at the barrier just as he had passed through. But the gods evidently afflict not only with blindness, but with deafness also, those on whose ruin they are bent, and while the poor deluded princess heard



not the distant clamouring, and was wondering as she looked out towards Paris what could occasion such a strange dim cloud to hang over the city, and the painter with trembling hands was adjusting his canvas to the point it had occupied the day before, a horseman was seen galloping in furious haste over the greensward, and rushing up to the Duke to deliver a packet into his hand without the customary etiquette of handing it first to the aide-de-camp. "Ah, a despatch from the Tuileries, to announce that all is quiet, no doubt!" said the Duchess, as she drew forth her *bonbonnière* from her reticule, and placed a leaf of the sugared orange-flower it contained between her lips.

But presently she started back from the window. The Duke, after waving his hand in token of dismissal of the battalion, had turned his horse suddenly round, and was galloping hastily towards the courtyard of the château. In a moment all was confusion and dismay. The usher, forgetful of courtly manners, had almost burst into the room; the sharp, quick step of the *officier d'ordonnance* was heard hurrying through the outer stone gallery. There was no time for packing, no time for adieux. In less than ten minutes the Duchess d'Angoulême was lifted into her carriage, the painter had seized his canvas and his box of colours, and was hurrying with his treasures back to Paris, and the palace of St. Cloud was deserted. News then was spread abroad at last of the capture of the Tuileries by the mob; the flight of the King from Paris, and that of the Duc d'Angoulême towards the frontier; that the officers commanding the Tuileries had been taken prisoners; and that M. de la Bouillerie, *Surintendant des Menus Plaisirs*, had barricaded the gates of the building, with no other thought than that of saving the Crown Diamonds, of which, by his office, he was responsible guardian. The papers, the ornaments, the garments of the royal family had all been thrown from the windows of the palace, and were lying among the bushes and flower-beds of the garden. No respect was paid by the mob to the jewels, and the rich laces, and the satins, and gorgeous stuffs found in the wardrobes. And where lay the Crown Diamonds amid this confusion? The case containing them was lying in the midst of the courtyard of the *Menus Plaisirs* beneath the tressel on which a servant named Jean Mottu was sawing the wood for winter use, the sawdust, as it fell, being

the only concealment afforded, while M. de la Bouillerie, armed with a pistol, walked up and down mounting guard, determined to defend to the last drop of his blood the treasure committed to his care.

Meanwhile the king was flying towards Rambouillet. There was no electric telegraph in those days, so that M. Chambellan, the intendant of the château, having received no intimation of the arrival of his majesty, who was usually preceded by a whole bevy of aides-de-camp, runners, and officers, was taken by surprise. He was completely paralysed on beholding the single attendant by whom his majesty was accompanied, then astounded at the absence of the "En Cas" by which the royal carriage was usually followed in case of accidents, and at last exasperated at sight of the undress liveries and dusty boots of the servants. And then—no etiquette whatever!—the King descended from his carriage without assistance like any common mortal, and walked up the steps, not leaning on the arm of the chief officer as usual, but upon his own gold-headed cane, which seemed to bend beneath his weight, so heavy was his gait. While poor Chambellan, faithful to etiquette, was walking slowly backward, the King passed him hurriedly, and turned to the little apartment on the ground floor—a room which had always been his majesty's favourite retreat on his frequent hunting visits to Rambouillet. It was a mysterious little boudoir, the walls painted in imitation of growing trees and underwood, the ceiling arched and painted to convey the idea of boughs meeting overhead; all was dark-green and somewhat sombre. This room had always been known as the *Bocage du Roi*. It had been so cunningly devised that it seemed like a continuation of the broad alley without—a real bocage belonging to the wood itself, which stretched beyond the window, mysterious and silent, with irregular peeps of the blue sky to be seen between the foliage. The room was furnished in a kind of mossy fabric, and the two recesses on each side of the chimney were occupied by mahogany cheffoniers, with bright gilt handles, always supposed to be the receptacle of familiar letters and papers only of domestic importance. Needing no usher to open the door, the King turned with a sudden jerk and entered, unclosing the door only half way, just giving room for the entrance of his own thin figure, and then, turning the key within, remained alone.

The attendants stood for a moment silent and motionless before that closed door, listening in awe for the summons which it was felt must come before long. But it came not, and the long hours of that fatal day passed away amid the strangest and most awful stillness. The King had taken no refreshment since the early morning; he had been astir since dawn, as was his wont, and the watchers in the vestibule began to feel uneasy as they beheld the sun gradually sinking lower and lower in the horizon. M. Chambellan had provided a cold collation, as he had always been accustomed to do on the flying visits of royalty to the château. But the pâtés, the champagne, the galantines, had been carried away to a cooler place than the dining-hall; the ice in the wine-coolers had been renewed many times; and the peaches in the crystal dishes had been re-covered several times with cool, fresh leaves. And still the King remained closeted in the Bocage, and the anguish of the few faithful followers was growing more intense with each minute. Courtly etiquette forbade any appeal to be made from without. It was felt that the news from Paris could not fail to arouse the inhabitants of Rambouillet, whose loyalty had long been doubtful. As yet the presence of the King had remained undiscovered. Fresh horses had been procured, and the two postillions were ready to jump into the saddle, little dreaming who it was they were called upon to drive, when the porter at the great gate came tearing up the avenue to announce that an immense crowd was marching on the road to the beating of drums and the clamouring of the Marseillaise. The King must have heard the words, for presently the door of the Bocage flew open, and he issued forth, a strange and altered man.

A score of years seemed to have passed over his head since his arrival in the morning. His figure had shrunk, and his countenance had assumed a grey, ashen hue, as though he had been suffering from long illness. He had evidently been weeping much. His eyelids were red and swollen, and his sunken eyes were so weakened that he had to shade them from the light as he emerged from the gloom of the Bocage. He carried beneath his arm a long, thin portfolio of red morocco, which he seemed to press closely to his side.

With a gesture of despair he stretched out his hand to grasp those of his friends, who stood awaiting his orders. But he

had none to give; he spoke not, but instinctively walked down the steps, and, without a word of adieu, was driven off to the Château de Maintenon.

What had his majesty been waiting for all these hours in the Bocage? None will ever know. Many people have been led to believe that he had been hoping to the last; nay, feeling almost sure that the people would be quieted, and that he would be sent for back to the Tuileries. No trace of his occupation of the Bocage was left, save the heap of burnt paper that lay upon the ashes and fluttering outwards at every breath of air, and the exhausted taper on the writing-table which had been suffered to burn down in the socket. A drawer of one of the cheffoniers stood open, and it was evident that the letters had been taken thence. "They were the love-letters written by Madame de Polastron; the only woman the Count d'Artois had ever loved," says the chronicle. No one who had ever known Charles Dix could suppose for a moment that he had taken all this pains to secure any documents of political importance. The second cheffonier had not been disturbed. The drawers contained the records of the royal hunt, day by day, neatly tied and arranged with minutest care.

Well was it for his majesty that he had escaped even thus tardily, for soon a mob of self-constituted authorities came hurrying from the town to search the château and bring back the King to Paris, there to await his trial and receive his sentence in due form. But the victim was spared this dishonour. He was hiding at Maintenon, thence to make his way by cross-roads to the frontier, and to fade out of the history of the country he had governed, and out of the memory of the nation he had endeavoured to deceive.

Aye—but the Crown Diamonds! What had befallen them? While everything else belonging to the crown of France, nay, the very man who had worn the crown itself, was being borne away into exile, the Crown Diamonds were safe enough—concealed, it is true, but not flying from pursuit; wending their way steadily along the high-road to Rambouillet, hidden beneath the straw in one of those queer-looking vehicles called haquets, high upon two wheels, and made to grind over the paved roads with terrible strain upon the nerves of the occupant. Two stout horses driven tandem-fashion trot along cheerfully, and in the driver, seated on the narrow ledge in front, may be recognised the

faithful Jean Mottu, who was sawing the logs in the courtyard of the Menus Plaisirs only a few hours before. Stretched at full length upon the straw, and jolted most cruelly, rolling from side to side with each shock of the vehicle, lay the portly form of the Count de la Bouillerie, who, on the morning of that July day, had risen Surintendant des Menus Plaisirs, one of the highest officers of the State, and now, to all appearance, was nothing better than a poor peasant-fellow, with linen blouse and red woollen nightcap, returning home in the empty haquet through charity of the driver. It was just midnight when this strange equipage drove up to the back entrance of the château, and the soi-disant peasant, bruised and stiffened by his ride, wriggled his way out of the straw and jumped on the stone pavement of the yard. M. Chambellan, who had remained on duty during the night, summoned on the instant, easily recognised his friend, who greeted him abruptly with the words: "You must help me in my trouble. I bear with me the fortunes of France—the Diamans de la Couronne!" M. Chambellan readily consented to bear a part in the adventure, and a coarse-looking old leather trunk, with rusty nails and iron-bound corners, was drawn from the straw at the bottom of the cart. They called no servant to their aid, and together they removed the trunk into the stone-passage which led to the kitchens. "The box is confided to your care," said M. de la Bouillerie; "I must fly quickly, and, thinking that none would help me but you, I brought it here." M. Chambellan was seized with terror at the awful responsibility he was made to undergo. "But what can I do with it?" gasped he. "Oh, do what you will—bury it in the ground—wall it up till the King's return; the people will be sure to call him back before long, and then the Crown Diamonds will be of far more value to you and yours than they have ever been to him. Now, be quick; hide the box at once, and let me go; for I, too, should be in danger of my life were I to be overtaken." With faltering hand did M. Chambellan seize one handle of the box, while La Bouillerie grasped the other, and between them they carried it into the château. M. de la Bouillerie then hurried back to the cart, and presently returned with Jean Mottu, carrying another box of exactly the same make and dimensions, equally old and weather-stained, with rusty nails and iron-bound corners.

To Chambellan's look of surprise, La Bouillerie merely nodded his head and laughed. "Don't be alarmed, mon ami," said he; "there is but one trésor de France—but one set of Crown Diamonds. This trunk contains nothing of any value excepting to myself, the owner—the family deeds of La Bouillerie, with the accounts connected with the estate. As I didn't know what the mob might choose to do with the nicknacks of the Menus Plaisirs, I thought I would place my title-deeds in a place of safety, where I can find them easily on my return, which I feel sure will not be long delayed. The two old boxes, as you see, are both alike—put mine into some of your 'capharnaums' in the yard—a pair of antique Florentine bailli, kept at the Menus Plaisirs as curiosities of the time of Louis Treiza. I keep the keys of both, so that your responsibility is saved. And now, good-bye, my friend in need. Jean Mottu will drive me to a little inn out of the town, and change this outlandish cart for a more respectable conveyance."

With that, he jumped back into the straw, and the cart moved slowly out of the courtyard, leaving poor Chambellan in an attitude of despair, contemplating the two chests that had been confided to his care.

He dared not bring the box which contained the Crown Diamonds to his own apartment. He dared not conceal it. He dared not ask for assistance to remove it, but dragged it out of sight into the small stone-paved room behind the confectioner's department, where the jellies and blancmanges were left to cool, and there, never having the courage to confide to anyone the secret of its contents, he resolved to devote himself to watching over it till the King's return. For this purpose, under the pretence of a dread of fire by insurgents, he had his bed brought down to this jelly-room, whose only window, by a happy chance, looked out over the more pleasant portion of the kitchen-garden. He covered the box with a tin case, which he screwed to the flooring of the room at the foot of the bed, and provided himself with a pair of pistols and a sabre, which he laid by his side. And yet he could never get a wink of sleep till dawn, so great was his terror lest the secret should have escaped, and that an attack might be made during the night to carry off the treasure. The few servants who

had remained declared that M. Chambellan had gone off his head ever since the King's last visit, and was under the terrible influence of incipient madness, which had taken the form of a nightly terror of being burnt in his bed. As for the other box, it gave him no uneasiness. Family papers are never of much account to strangers. He had it conveyed away into the outhouse in the yard, so that whenever M. de la Bouillerie came to claim it there might be no rushing hither and thither, and no fear of its being disturbed "till the King's restoration to the Tuileries, and the superintendent's own restoration to office."

But weeks grew into months, and still the Florentine box, covered with its tin case, remained in the jelly-room of the Château de Rambouillet. Charles Dix returned not. The Revolution had failed to bring the Republic, and the Tuileries had received a new royal guest, who, being no sportsman, had almost forgotten the Château de Rambouillet. But M. Chambellan, true to his trust, still slept in the little room on the basement floor, to the detriment of his health, and still declared that it was in dread of fire that he did so.

The day of release came at last, however. One fine afternoon M. de la Bouillerie came driving up the avenue in gallant style, in his own carriage, which bore the arms of his own family, ousted from office, it is true, but on friendly terms with "the people at the Tuileries." He laughed heartily at Chambellan's description of the terrors he had been made to undergo, and promised to release him from his trust. He had been all this while in Germany, and had actually forgotten the heavy responsibility with which he had burthened his friend—for, to speak truth, "the Crown Diamonds of France had become *le cadet de ses soucis*." The "usurper" would no doubt be in the same case, for he went in daily fear of his life. But he would, as a matter of course, be glad of the jewels, for probably he would soon be thinking of his coronation at Rheims—all "usurpers" have that mania.

The visit of M. de la Bouillerie had nothing whatever to do with any charge belonging to his late office. It simply had for object the search for a document in his own deed-box, as he wished to sell a portion of his estate. Having but a few moments to spare, he would get the paper

out immediately, and hurry on his journey as quickly as possible. Together the friends repaired to the shed, or outhouse, in which the box had been placed. The fowls of the yard had made sad havoc with the cord with which the box was bound, but no attempt had been made to unfasten it, for the knot was tight as ever.

When it had been dragged from amid the rubbish into the light, La Bouillerie drew the key from his waistcoat-pocket and placed it in the lock. But whether it was through the rust incurred by the damp, or the dust consequent on neglect, the key refused to turn, and so violent was the effort made to induce it to act, that it snapped suddenly, and broke in the lock. M. de la Bouillerie flew into a violent rage, and kicked against the old Florentine box in his frenzy. But it became clear enough that a blacksmith must be sent for, and the Count stamped with impatience while the workman proceeded to pick the lock. At last it yielded, the lid of the box sprang back, and a cry of surprise, almost of terror, burst from the beholders. Great Heavens! there lay the Crown Diamonds of France in confusion, shaken out of place by the violence to which they had just been subjected, sparkling and flashing with intensest brightness. The Regent had fallen from its velvet sheath, and had rolled close to the edge of the box, where it seemed to glare in irony upon the countenance of M. de la Bouillerie as he took it up to replace it in its case. For the first time, perhaps, he thought of the disgrace that might have been his portion had the Regent been missing; of the four hundred and eighty thousand pounds it was supposed to represent; and of the receipt of its value to that amount he had given to the Government on taking it under his charge. His hand, indeed, trembled so violently that he failed to adjust the jewel properly in its place, and it slipped from his grasp. The locksmith, with his hard, horny fingers, picked it up, exclaiming, "*Tu dieu! what a beautiful piece of glass!* I wonder why they keep it so carefully?" By the shock of the discovery, poor Chambellan was completely unnerved. He insisted on getting rid at once of the perilous burthen. It must be conveyed away forthwith—not to-morrow, but on the instant. More than ever would he feel himself oppressed with the weight of the obligation of its keeping. The Count was compelled to retrace his journey to Paris, instead of proceeding on

his journey to La Bouillerie. With the Florentine box at his side, he announced himself at the Tuileries, and deposited the Crown Diamonds in the hands of General Athalin, the Governor of the Palace, who had the box placed at once in the King's own private study to await his majesty's decision concerning its destination. After the enjoyment of a hearty laugh with the General at the strange adventure which had befallen the treasure, the Count went back to Rambouillet to fetch the worthless box of papers so carefully guarded. Glad enough was he to escape from the responsibility of the Crown Diamonds, and gain his own home with the title-deeds all safe.

But the adventures of the diamonds were not yet ended. Amid the trouble and danger—the street-riots and attempts at assassination which beset with bewilderment the early portion of the reign of Louis Philippe, there was little time for attention to be paid to the baubles and fripperies of royalty. Neither Queen Marie Amélie nor her daughters ever thought of wearing any of the State jewels, and so the Crown Diamonds were once more forgotten. But one day, after the first attempts at rebellion had been quelled, and quiet had been restored for a time, the new Surintendant of the Menus Plaisirs applied for the jewels which he supposed had been conveyed away for safety, but for which the attested list in his possession made him responsible. General Athalin answered the appeal at once. He remembered where he had deposited the chest delivered to him by La Bouillerie, and went straight to the spot in the King's study. To his astonishment the chest was gone. No trace of it was to be found. The consternation was great throughout the royal apartments, and of course all kinds of suspicions were uttered concerning the persons admitted to audience in that royal sanctum. After some little time, the Duke of Orleans was called to council. On hearing the story of the supposed robbery of the state jewels, told as it was in trembling accents by the State officials, he burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter. "What! the Diamans de la Couronne in that old ramshackle leather trunk which stood beneath the table in the King's study? Why, I had it taken away myself. You will find it beneath my desk, where it has been serving me for some time as a convenient foot-stool!" Thence was the old box brought out, and soon committed to proper

guardianship, and there did the Crown jewels remain, until the Empress Eugénie utilised for her own adornment the choicest specimens, with a view of adding to the splendour and glory of the Empire.

What will be their next adventure? No one believes for a moment that they will be sold, for the great Alexis, the somnambule, when consulted upon the subject, declared they will never be dispersed. Further than this, however, his skill in prophecy cannot lead us.

Is the story of the Crown Diamonds to end after all by their being brought to the auction-room, according to the decision of the Conseil d'Etat, or will that decision be set aside, and are they destined to be set in another crown by the exertion of their own mysterious power? This latter conclusion seems possible, for as suddenly as they were advertised for sale, so suddenly, with the change of ministry, were they withdrawn.

## CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

### DEVONSHIRE.

OF all the English counties Devonshire may claim to be the choicest flower. In a country picturesque and yet highly fertile; with a bold, romantic coast-line, here jutting into a noble headland, and there recessed into a sheltered, lovely bay, with rich foliage feathering down to the bright, clear waters; a country where beautiful rivers wind among hills of every variety of form; where the rich red sandstone vies with the stern and barren granite, and the gloom of the lovely Tor is contrasted with the beauty of the valley beneath; in a country such as this, not only is Nature bountiful and even redundant in her gifts, but a certain richness and exuberance of character seems to mark the human beings who inhabit the favoured land. Its heroes and worthies are cast in no stinted mould: their tempers were fiery and their passions warm; and the ancient English blood, which elsewhere may have grown cold and thin, preserves its colour and vitality in the rich vales of Devon.

Favoured, too, among cities is Exeter—the ceastor, or camp, upon the Exe, the ancient Isca which Ptolemy noted in his geography, and which has preserved its name almost unchanged through the changes of all these long ages. The first origin of the city dates, indeed, beyond all written chronicles, and when it comes first

into notice as a Saxon settlement, we find its old British population still dwelling side-by-side with the more recent settlers. There was a Welsh quarter as well as an English quarter in old Exeter; and sometimes a powerful chief from the West Wales, which is now Cornwall—the land beyond the Tamar—might take advantage of English dissensions, and levy tribute on the city. But Athelstan, the successor of Alfred the Great, finally disposed of these British pretensions, and established the river Tamar as the boundary, that way, of the Saxon land. And thus the Welsh inhabitants of the city, cut off from their countrymen, assumed the language and the habits of the English, and soon became merged among them.

Under a less determined ruler than William the Norman, Exeter might have long remained a kind of free city, with jurisdiction over the country round. But William soon laid siege to the place, and though its citizens gallantly manned its walls, yet, after a siege of eighteen days, it fell before the science of the best military engineering of the day, and William, storming in, carried fire and sword among the old Roman streets and market-places. Then he rebuilt the old castle of Rougemont, on the red, sandy hill above the town, rather to overawe the inhabitants than to strengthen the city defences, just as Philip Augustus, a century later, built his frowning Bastille over William's once proud city of Rouen. It was this castle of Rougemont whose name brought a foreboding to the soul of Richard the Third, as Shakespeare makes him say :

When last I was at Exeter,  
The mayor, in courtesy, show'd me the castle,  
And called it Rougemont; at which name I started,  
Because a bard of Ireland told me once  
I should not live long after I saw Richmond.

Little is left of the old castle but ruins of the enclosing walls; and, indeed, the city generally has been so often modernised and improved, as to present an open and cheerful appearance. But the mark of the Roman hand is still there, in the alignment of its four chief streets, which point to the cardinal points of the compass, and which were once terminated by the four principal gateways, which gateways and the city-walls were tolerably complete up to the middle of the last century. And still many old houses and curious street façades remain to give a picturesque aspect to the city, while, crowning the whole, the cathedral rises proudly among its subject spires. The general outline of the cathedral is almost

unique among churches, as its two towers are placed north and south at either end of the transepts. It is difficult to account for this arrangement, for the theory that these were the original Norman towers, that once marked the western front of an earlier church, seems quite untenable. But it is possible that the builders of the towers took advantage of the already existing foundations of some civil structure—perhaps of Roman date—and thus, cutting their architectural coat according to their masonic cloth, produced a result which can hardly be called successful in respect of outward aspect. The richness of the interior—its carvings, its shrines, and monuments, compensate for the defects in its original plan.

Closely connected with the history of city and county both for good and evil is the ancient family of Courtenay, who in their strong castle of Powderham, which commands the estuary of the Exe, more than once made war upon the citizens and blockaded the river-channel. The name of Powderham has not an ancient sound, but it has no connection with gunpowder, and is really a relic of ancient British dominion in these parts—a little bit of fossil Welsh with Saxon encrustations. Most likely it was once *Aberdwr* or the *Watermeet*, from the little stream which joins the Exe hereabouts; but, anyhow, here stood an ancient fortress which dates back to dateless periods. The Courtenays did not come in with the Norman herd. They were of the old high French nobility, who claimed descent from Meroving or Carloving, and rather turned up their noses at the Capets. Scions of the house had occupied the imperial throne of Constantinople during the Latin usurpation, and the historian Gibbon has turned aside from the chronicles of the "decline and fall" to celebrate the family lineage. In England the Courtenays made their entry with the first Plantagenet. Reginald de Courtenay, indeed, had been the friendly broker who arranged the marriage between Henry and Eleanor, his richly-dowered Queen, and he was rewarded by a rich and comely bride in the person of Hawise, daughter and heiress of Robert d'Avranches, Viscount of Devon and Governor of Exeter Castle. And the elder branch of the family, by an alliance with the house of York, came within measurable distance of the Crown of England, but that Henry the Eighth put down his heavy hand, and Courtenay, Marquis of Exeter,

perished on the scaffold. The Courtenays still retain, says Gibbon, the plaintive motto which asserts the innocence and deploras the fall of their ancient house: "Ubi lapsus? quid feci?" A fall, however, broken by Powderham Castle, its parks, and gardens, and rich domains, will seem to most people a very endurable calamity.

In the great and fertile valley of the Exe, rich with orchards and dairies, the cider-press is a more potent engine than the brewer's vats, and everywhere the juice of the apple is the favourite drink of the population. That was a bold Chancellor of the Exchequer—bold in his ignorance and inexperience—who first laid a tax upon cider. The Ministry of Lord Bute was responsible for the excise upon cider; but Lord Bute and his Chancellor of the Exchequer took care not to visit Devonshire. The storm fell upon the Duke of Bedford—Lord Bute's inoffensive successor—who had a residence near Exeter. Visiting that city he was surrounded by an incensed multitude, and barely escaped with a whole skin by taking refuge in the cathedral, whence he was smuggled into the Bishop's palace, while the mob were watching every avenue and howling for his blood. Later on Mr. Pitt made it a condition of accepting office that the cider-tax should be repealed, and, before long, the obnoxious impost was abandoned.

The love of cider, however, has not inspired the men of Devon to celebrate its praises in poetry. No Ollivier Basselin has arisen, as in the rival cider countries of Normandy, to wreath the cider-jug with the poet's lays—the one rather humdrum poet, Phillips, who has written on cider, was surely a Herefordshire man. And yet Devonshire is fertile in peasant poets, whose lays are, however, more of the sentimental order than infected with that ancient gaiety, of which there is such a scanty survival.

But Devonshire has produced one poet of the highest order. On the charming little river Otter, which runs an independent course, beginning and ending in Devonshire, stands a little town which takes its name from the river, or from the animal that haunts the river, Ottery Saint Mary. It may be said, in parenthesis, that otters are naturally so plentiful in all streams that suit their habits and abound in fish, that one wonders how the stream could have taken its name from such an ordinary circumstance, and is led to suspect a

fossil Welshman lurking within the otter's furry skin. But, anyhow, at Ottery Saint Mary lived, during the greater part of last century, the worthy Mr. Coleridge, vicar of the church and master of the ancient grammar-school—described as a studious, pious, learned man, of primitive manners; a compound, one would think, of Parson Adams and the Vicar of Wakefield. Samuel Taylor Coleridge was the son of a second marriage; the worthy vicar, in the decline of life, finding a new growth of olive-branches around him; the mother, a stirring, managing woman, with much ado to make both ends meet, and to keep the parson—good, untidy man—decently respectable in his apparel. With "S. T. C.," an abbreviation by which he was known to all his familiars, childhood was no vision of delight, but a painful struggle between a weak and indolent constitution, shrinking from all kinds of pain and trouble, and the energy of a passionate imagination. The youngest child of ten in a noisy, bustling household, where the shifts of poverty were often painfully apparent, Coleridge, with shrinking sensitiveness, took refuge in the thoughtful, brooding habit which coloured and controlled his after-life. At the same time, he was not free from bursts of jealous passion at the ascendancy of his elder brothers; and he records that on one occasion of such an outburst, dreading a whipping from the avenging paternal—or, perhaps, maternal—hand, he ran away from home, and passed a night of rain and storm on the bleak side of a hill on the river Otter.

Not long, however, lasted the poet's connection with Devonshire. When the boy was seven years old his father died, and the whole family were left to fight their way through the world with the very slenderest outfit. Happily, in Devon there existed a warmth of feeling for fellow-countrymen that made itself felt in many acts of kindness to the orphans. And the Coleridges are surely of real Devonshire stock; for there is only one village of the name in all England, and that not far away, but just beyond where the waters divide, on the pleasant river Taw, whose waters flow by Barnstaple Bridge to the Bristol Channel. It is this double seaboard, by the way, which gives us such a sense of magnificent distance in Devonshire—to travel from one sea to another, and all in the same county, while the aspects of the different coasts—both warm and inviting—with their contrasts and rivalries in



beauties of every kind, recall the loveliest nooks of the sunny Mediterranean Sea.

To return from this digression to the Coleridge family, who must have sprung from this pleasant Devonshire village, with something about them, perhaps, of the Scandinavian pirates, who fought and settled about these lovely fiords time out of mind. Some touch of the sea-rover's blood must have been in him who wrote the Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner, with something of the Roman, more of the Celt, and the residuum, like the *aqua pura* of the prescription, filled up with the homely Saxon strain. It is this mixture of races which gives its richness and interest to the blood of the Devonshire worthies.

One of these worthies was Mr. Justice Buller, who lived close by, and who had been a pupil of the late vicar of Ottery. The Judge took upon himself the charge of the education of the youngest boy—a burden which was lightened for the worthy justice by his obtaining for the lad a presentation to Christ's Hospital. When Coleridge donned the long gabardine and yellow stockings of the Bluecoat-boy, he ceased to have any direct connection with Devonshire; but, as a lad from the countryside, we may take a glimpse of him in the then bare corridors of Christ's School, moping, friendless, half-starved; or in the Strand—surely not so crowded then as now—making his way blindly along, throwing out his arms, and fancying that he was swimming the Hellespont. And so he strikes out into the fob of some old gentleman of the period—stout, with dangling seals, like one of Sam Weller's friends, we may imagine—who forthwith collars him severely for a pickpocket. "What, so young and so wicked!" And then, as he stoops to listen to the young culprit's defence, "Hey, the Hellespont!" the old gentleman's face brightens. The lad has found a friend, who gives him the run of a library in King Street, Cheapside.

Another friend for the poor lad was a cobbler—a Devonshire lad, too, likely enough—who had a shop by Christchurch Gate, where the boy would spend his holidays; and, becoming attached to the shoemaker and his family, it was agreed between them that he should be demanded as an apprentice by the son of Crispin. But Coleridge was already noticed as something beyond the average schoolboy; and, indeed, but for his vivid imagination and weak will, he would have made a fine

scholar, and might have been lost to posterity as a Bishop or a Judge. Anyhow, he was destined for a Grecian, and to take his way to Cambridge University.

And thus Coleridge was lost to the Vale of Otter, where he might have found, perhaps, a more potent enchantment than Wordsworth among his Northern hills, although he tells us late in life that, when he shut his eyes in the sunshine, he had a vision of the pebbly-bed of the bright river, and the chequered light upon the glancing waters.

More completely a Devonshire hero was Francis Drake, the son of a Protestant preacher of Reformation times, who, driven by the sting of Popery, withdrew from his native Devon into Kent, and there found a refuge with his twelve sons in the hull of a stranded ship, somewhere on the lonely shores of the river about Upnor. Thus the great seaman's cradle was in the ribs of a ship, and he took to the sea as naturally as a duck to the water. His kinsmen, too, were among the bold seamen of the coast, and, with Hawkins and the rest, he was soon at work, trading from port to port, trading for slaves along the Guinea Coast, and filibustering on the Spanish Main. Everyone knows the story of his game of bowls on Plymouth Hoe, when the Armada was reported in sight, and Drake declared for finishing the game and beating the Spaniards afterwards.

In Devonshire, the hero of popular legend assumes almost supernatural proportions. Struck by his horse's hoofs, the rocks are split, and a spring bursts forth that supplies Tavistock with water. Strange, too, is the story of Drake's wife. Seven years had elapsed since Drake had sailed from Plymouth Sound, and no word of him had reached his home. All thought that he was lost, and his reputed widow, like Penelope, was besieged by importunate suitors. At last she consented to crown the hopes of the most favoured of these, and to church they went. But, in the midst of the service, a smothered roar was heard from beneath; the chancel floor was rent by a cannon-shot. "It is Drake," said the woman with mingled joy and fear; "it is Drake who fired that, and I am still his wife!" In fact, Drake was at that particular moment at the antipodes, and had fired the salvo which had thus marvelously taken effect.

When Sir Francis Drake had risen to wealth and distinction he purchased the

ancient abbey of Buckland, between Tavistock and Plymouth. With his inborn detestation of anything papistical, Drake insisted on the house being called Buckland Place, but its original description still sticks to it, and Buckland Abbey is still the residence of the Drakes, and contains many interesting relics of the great circumnavigator.

About here begins the mining district, which stretches into the wilds of Dartmoor forest—one of the bits of wild England still left almost undisturbed by the march of civilisation. Dartmoor—called by the natives Dartymoor—covers a hundred and thirty thousand acres of land, and has a mean height of seventeen hundred feet above the sea-level, while Yester, the highest point, reaches two thousand and fifty feet of altitude; and with clouds hanging about its granite rocks, and with storms sweeping over its wild surface, Dartmoor is as rude and desolate a wilderness as one could wish to see. In the centre of the moor stands the convict-prison, its gloom in harmony with its surroundings—a building originally designed for French prisoners in the great Napoleonic wars.

Of old the country round about was the great resort of metal-seekers and tinminers. Here, on Crocken Tor, met the ancient parliament of the miners, the Stannary Court, with its benches and judgment-seat, rudely formed of granite blocks. The Stannators who composed the parliament were, in more modern times, elected by the mayors of the four coinage towns—Chagford, Ashburton, Plympton, and Tavistock. Their prison was close by, in Lidford Tower, with gloomy dungeons, whose horrors have left an impression on popular imagination.

I oft have heard of Lydford's law,  
How in the morn they hang and draw,  
And sit in judgment after.

"Lydford law—hang first, and try afterwards," was the old saying, which may claim to be the old original of all the many sayings to the like effect about other popular jurisdictions. The last parliament on Crocken Tor was held as late as 1749, when its members, after a formal meeting, adjourned to more comfortable quarters at an inn. But the Stannary Courts are still held, although they have now their headquarters at Truro among the Cornishmen.

Dartmoor Forest forms part of the Duchy of Cornwall—a relic of the lengthened hold the princes of West Wales had over this wild and hilly tract. The

forest has had its laureates—one in the person of J. Cottle, the Bristol publisher, and early patron of Coleridge and Southey. But "Dartmoor Forest, a Poem," is one of the tamest things imaginable on a wild subject, and does not contain a single line that is worth quoting. Coaker, the last of the forest poets, the rate-collector and village bard, has seized one of the most characteristic effects of Dartmoor in the following lines:

It's oft enveloped in a fog  
Because it's up so high.

Much more might be written of Dartmoor; of its streams, with their rude, ancient clatter or clapper bridges, built of the rough, unhewn stone of the district; of its stout foxes, and the stout men and hounds who hunt them; of its ancient customs, which retain traces of a Celtic element; and of the folk-lore which still lingers among its peasantry; but time forbids, and we must descend the southern slopes of the forest, where the streams are hurrying on to join the swift Dart where it flows through one of the fairest of English vales.

From ancient Totnes, where the navigation of the river Dart begins—Totnes, with its castle and priory, an old walled town, perhaps the most ancient port in the kingdom, where, as legend has it, Brutus landed with the relics of the Trojans—from Totnes the voyage down the river to Dartmouth recalls the most favoured reaches of the Rhine, only, as Devonshire men are proud to add, it is still more beautiful. And Dartmouth itself is one of the quaintest and prettiest of seaports, with its Henry the Seventh castle, where guns are still mounted, its church spires rising above, and its houses perched on the hill-side, "pensile and hanging in rows like gallipots in an apothecary's shop."

Indeed, all the coast from Dartmouth and Exmouth is full of interest. Here is Brixham, a rare old fishing-town, the headquarters of the trawling-fleet of the Channel and North Sea, with its noted quay, looking over Torbay, where once William of Orange's fleet lay at anchor. William landed on Brixham quay, and, according to tradition, was received by the old salts of the place with a rhymed address:

You be welcome to Brixham quay,  
To eat buckhorn and drink bohea  
Along with we.

From Torbay William marched along the coast towards Exeter. He slept the

first night at Ford House, while his army lay encamped on Milberdown, and his first proclamation was issued from the market-place of Newton Abbot.

At that time Torquay, now one of the handsomest towns on the coast, was a mere fishing-village. Its prosperity began in the great Continental war, when the Channel Fleet was often in the neighbourhood, and the place became the favourite residence of the families of the chief naval officers. Teignmouth, too, has risen in the prosperity of later years, although long ago it was of some note as a port, and had a fishery for salmon, which noble fish seems now to have deserted the Devonshire rivers.

Following the Teign, on one of its feeders we come to Bovey Tracey, whose name commemorates its former lords, "the Traceys with the wind in their faces"—an ill wind that had blown ever since a Tracey laid sacrilegious hands on the sainted Becket. Higher up, the Teign passes through an ancient terra sancta of the Druids, so tradition says, with cromlechs and logan stones, and other relics of ancient sacred rites. And here we are near the northern slope of Dartmoor, where Okehampton stands on the borders between civilisation and the wild—Okehampton, with its fine ruined castle on a rocky knoll, a veritable baron's hold, where the Earls of Devon once held their mimic court. And hence we may follow the stream that presently joins the Torridge to flow on to Bideford and its ancient bridge, which Kingsley has made familiar to everybody.

Off Bideford Bay lies the strange, little-visited island of Lundy, that rises from the sea like a fragment of a sunken land. Lundy was long a sort of no-man's land, hardly owning allegiance to the British Crown—a kind of crow's-nest on the seas, the haunt of pirates and filibusters. Sometimes the French, sometimes the Spaniards, sometimes even Turks, and Moors, and Salee Rovers would make a depôt of Lundy, and harass the neighbouring coasts. But the strangest part of its history dates from the middle of the last century, when it fell into the hands of a Devonshire man of the fine, old, bold, predacious stock, whose misfortune it was to have come into the world a couple of centuries too late. This was Mr. Thomas Benson, of an old Bideford family, the Bensons of Napp, a family of merchants trading with France, Portugal, and the

Colonies. Mr. Benson was one of the first to discover the opportunities afforded to shipowners by the practice of insuring against sea risks. He chartered a vessel called the *Nightingale*, for Maryland, loaded her with brickbats and rubbish, and cast her away somewhere on the coast of Ireland. But he was a man much respected in his neighbourhood, was Member of Parliament for Barnstaple, and had sufficient influence to obtain a Government contract for transporting convicts to Virginia.

At that time, gangs of poor wretches who had saved their necks from the merciless laws of the period, were marched, linked together by ropes or fetters, to some seaport on the coast, thence to be transported to his majesty's plantations in Virginia or elsewhere, so much a head being allowed to the contractor who undertook to convey them across the seas. To bold Benson occurred the luminous idea of saving the cost of their transport and of turning their labour to account. And thus he leased or purchased Lundy Island, landed his convicts there, and set them to work to build their own huts and raise their own provisions, while their leisure time was employed in building a home and castle for the self-appointed governor. This castle Mr. Benson armed with cannon, and was most punctilious in making all passing vessels dip their flags to his. If they omitted, bang went a gun, and, thus showing that he would stand no nonsense, our adventurer generally carried his point.

But Benson's projects did not stop at this. He aimed at establishing his convict settlement as a general depôt for contraband goods, whence they could be landed at convenient points on the English coast. And this at last aroused the vigilance of the executive. The misdisposal of convicts, after all, was a trifling matter compared with the depletion of his majesty's Customs. Indeed, Benson was inclined to brazen out the former offence. "They were transported from England," he urged as to the convicts, "no matter where it was, so long as it was out of the kingdom."

One would like to hear of bold Benson holding his fort to the last, and then blowing it up, and ascending skywards with its ruins. But instead of this heroic finish the poor man fell a victim to a Government bombardment of fines, escheats, and penalties, and soon, from being governor of an island, he became a penniless exile from his native land.

Just now we wrote of Lundy's land as

lying off Bideford Bay. But a Barnstaple man would dispute that as a geographical fact, and maintain that it was Barnstaple Bay, for the two rival and yet friendly towns share bay and estuary between them, each with a corner to itself. And if Bideford Bridge be famous, even more famous is Barnstaple—a bridge of sixteen arches, ancient but well preserved, of the origin of which Leland gives the following account: "This bridge was made long since, by a merchant of London, called Stawford by this occasion. He chanced to be at Berstaple to buy cloth, and saw a woman trying to come over by the lower salt-marsh, and the tide came on so sore in by a gutte that brekith in there from the Haven, that she could not passe, and creying for help, no man durst come to her, and so she was drowned." Upon which, this worthy merchant left money with the Prior of Barnstaple to begin the bridge, and continued the supply till the bridge was finished.

And from Barnstaple we come to Ilfracombe, favoured among watering-places, and Combemartin, once noted for its silver-mine, from which was produced the material ore of one of the loving-cups of the City of London, as the inscription upon it testifies:

In place called Coombe where Martin longe  
Had hid me in his molde.

And here we are on the borders of wild Exmoor, where men still hunt the red deer, as in the days of the Red King who loved them so well. But Exmoor lies chiefly in Somersetshire, and thus our round fairly comes to an end.

### THE PETS OF AUTHORS.

"THE literary man should have his dog, a true companion and faithful, but well chosen, not to be made a 'pet,' but a friend of," thinks Mr. Percy Fitzgerald. As a matter of fact, scarcely an author of repute has been without a pet of some kind, and has not celebrated its beauties and virtues in prose or verse. The tender feeling of respect for animals, exhibited by some poets, has puzzled cold-hearted people, who cannot understand why anyone would go into ecstasies over a dog; but the secret is explained to some extent by Mrs. Kingsley. Referring to Charles Kingsley, she said: "His love of animals was deepened by his belief in their future state—a belief which he held in common

with John Wesley, Agassiz, Bishop Butler, and many other remarkable men."

It may be taken for granted that all warm-hearted men of letters have had some one pet—generally a dog. One notable exception to this rule must be mentioned. The largest-hearted man that ever lived seems to have had no corner in his heart for dogs. We refer to Shakespeare, who not only had no love for dogs, but a real dislike to them. Horses he could admire, but for dogs he had not one good word. "Sir Henry Holland once lost a bet of a guinea owing to his failure to find a dog spoken kindly of by Shakespeare. Shakespeare evidently looked upon them all more or less as curs, snappish and cowardly."

Foremost among the pets of authors, however, comes the dog. He holds the place of honour by virtue of his intelligence and his faithfulness. Great natures are essentially solitary, and therefore find solace in pets. Byron found more sympathy in a dog than in a man. He pronounced his dog Boatswain his truest and only friend. He sleeps under a marble slab at Newstead, which bears this noble epitaph: "Here are deposited the remains of one who possessed beauty without vanity, strength without insolence, courage without ferocity, and all the virtues of man without his vices. This praise, which would be unmeaning flattery if written over his ashes, is but a just tribute to the memory of Boatswain—a dog."

Dogs were the constant companions of Sir Walter Scott. "The wisest dog I ever had," he says, "was what is called the bull-dog terrier. I taught him to understand a great many words, insomuch that I am positive that the communication between the canine species and ourselves might be greatly enlarged." This was Camp, at whose funeral the whole family stood in tears round the grave, and Mrs. Lockhart recalls how her father smoothed down the turf above Camp with the saddest expression she had ever seen on his face. On the evening of the dog's death, Scott excused himself from a dinner engagement, alleging as his apology, "the death of a dear old friend." So great a fascination did Sir Walter Scott exercise over dumb creatures, that even strange dogs in the Edinburgh streets used to pay him homage. Carlyle relates how a little Blenheim cocke, one of the smallest, beautifullest, and tiniest of dogs, with which he was well acquainted—a dog so shy that it would crouch towards

its mistress and draw back with angry timidity if anyone did but look at him admiringly—once met in the street a tall, singular, busy-looking man, who was walking by, and, running towards him, began fawning, frisking, licking at his feet, and every time he saw Sir Walter afterwards in Edinburgh he repeated his demonstrations of delight. Washington Irving speaks of the whole garrison of dogs, all open-mouthed and vociferous, that rushed out to meet him when first the wheels of his chaise disturbed the quiet of Abbotsford. Many other references occur to them in the biographies of friends who visited him at Abbotsford. "I must not omit to describe the dogs," says Leslie, the painter, "who are very important members of the family. Sir Walter is never seen unaccompanied by two at least. There are a set of black terriers, of the true Dandie Dinmont breed, named Spice, Ginger, Mustard, and Whisky, a large greyhound called Hamlet, and a very venerable old deerhound, of gigantic size, named Maida, besides Lady Scott's own particular dog, Risk, and sundry pointers belonging to Charles Scott." When Sir Walter lost his property, he wrote these touching lines: "My dogs will wail for me. The thought of parting from these dumb creatures has moved me more than anything else. Poor things! I must get them kind masters. There may yet be those who, loving me, will love my dog because it has been mine. Alas! I feel my dogs' feet on my knees; I hear them whining and seeking me. What would they do if they knew how things may be!"

Wonderful was the affection of Miss Mitford for her dogs, which were her constant companions. Of one she wrote: "My pet is neither very good nor very handsome. I did not choose him—he chose me. He sought me, followed me, loved me, would be loved, and was loved. There is no resisting preference and affection, come from where they may; so he is my pet. . . . Mossy was a large black dog, of the very largest and strongest kind of greyhounds; very fast, and honest and resolute—past example; a magnificent and noble-looking creature. There never was such a dog! His temper was beyond comparison the sweetest ever known. Nobody ever saw him out of humour, and his sagacity was equal to his temper. . . . Under a fir-tree, marked with his initials, he lies. We covered his dear body with flowers. . . . No human being was ever so faithful, so gentle, so generous, and so

fond. I shall never love anything so well." Having no children to love, Miss Mitford, with all a woman's necessity for loving something, adored her dog Mossy.

One of Mrs. Browning's most exquisite poems is addressed "To Flush, my dog," which seems to have possessed extraordinary affection. "This dog," she said in a note about the poem, "was the gift of my dear and admired friend, Miss Mitford, and belongs to the beautiful race she has rendered celebrated among English and American readers. The Flushes have their laurels as well as the Cæsars—the chief difference (at least, the very head and front of it) consisting, perhaps, in the bald head of the latter under the crown." Two or three verses of Mrs. Browning's beautiful tribute of praise to her devoted companion must be quoted:

But of thee it shall be said,  
This dog watched beside a bed—  
Day and night, unwearied;  
Watched within a curtained room,  
Where no sunbeam broke the gloom,  
Round the sick and dreary.

Roses gathered for a vase,  
In that chamber died apace,  
Beam and breeze resigning;  
This dog only waited on,  
Knowing that when light is gone,  
Love remains for shining.

Other dogs in thymy dews,  
Tracked the hares, and followed through  
Sunny moor or meadow.  
This dog only crept, and crept  
Near a languid cheek that slept,  
Sharing in the shadow.

Other dogs, of loyal cheer,  
Bounded at the whistle clear,  
Up the woodside hieing;  
This dog only watched in reach  
Of a faintly-uttered speech,  
Or a louder sighing.

Writing to a friend of a visit paid her by Miss Mitford and her favourite Flush, Mrs. Browning said:

"Never in the world was such another dog as my Flush! Just now, because, after reading your note, I laid it down thoughtfully without taking anything else up, he threw himself into my arms, as much as to say: 'Now it's my turn; you are not at all busy now!' He understands everything, and would not disturb me for the world." Adding, with fine consideration for Miss Mitford's feelings: "Do not tell Miss Mitford, but her Flush is not to be compared to mine—is quite animal and dog natural, and incapable of my Flush's hypercritical refinement. There is not such a dog in the world as he is—I must say it again, and never was except the one Plato swore by. I talk to him just as I should do to any reasoning animal on two legs.

the only difference being that he has four superfluously."

"Christopher North's" dogs were too numerous to describe. Of one dog, Mrs. Gordon writes: "I never knew so eccentric a dog as Tory; he had many friends, but his ways were queer and wandering. There was no place of public amusement he did not attend; his principles were decidedly those of a dog about town; and, though serious, grave, and composed in deportment, he preferred stir and excitement to rest and decorum. Tory was never known to go to church, but at the door of the theatre or at the assembly-rooms, he has been seen to linger for hours. He was a long-backed, yellow terrier, with his front feet slightly turned out, and an expression of countenance full of mildness and wisdom." Another showed even more intelligence. "I remember," says Mrs. Gordon, "that shortly before the poor creature died, longing for the sympathy of his master's kind voice, he crawled upstairs to a room next the drawing-room; my father stood beside him, trying to soothe and comfort the poor animal. A few minutes before death closed his fast-glazing eyes, the Professor said, 'Rover, my poor fellow, give me your paw.' The dying animal made an effort to reach his master's hand; and so thus parted my father with his favourite, as one man taking farewell of another."

Pope had a dog which he described as "a little one, a lean one, and none of the finest shape;" and remarked: "If it be the chief point of friendship to comply with a friend's motions and inclinations, he possesses this in an eminent degree. He lies down when I sit, and walks when I walk, which is more than many friends can pretend to." Charles Kingsley's dog Dandy, a fine Scotch terrier, was his companion in all his parish walks, attended at the cottage-lectures and school-lessons, and was his and the children's friend for thirteen years. Charles Lamb had a pet, but could not control it. In an account of his friends and acquaintances, Patmore said: "Just before the Lambs quitted the metropolis for the voluntary banishment at Enfield Chase, they came to spend a day with me at Fulham, and brought with them a companion, who, dumb animal though it was, had for some time past been in the habit of giving play to one of Charles Lamb's amiable characteristics—that of sacrificing his own feelings and inclinations to those of others. The performance of

the pig-driver that Leigh Hunt describes so capitally in the Companion must have been an easy and straightforward thing compared with the enterprise of the dear couple in conducting Dash from Islington to Fulham. It appeared, however, that they had not undertaken it this time for Dash's gratification; but—as I had often admired the dog—to ask me if I would accept him: 'if only out of charity,' said Miss Lamb, 'for if we keep him much longer he'll be the death of Charles.' I readily took charge of the unruly favourite, and soon found, as I suspected, that his wild and wilful ways were a pure imposition upon the easy temper of Lamb, for as soon as he found himself in the keeping of one who knew what dog-decorum was, he subsided into the best bred and best behaved of his species." A few weeks after Patmore took charge of him, Lamb wrote a characteristic letter in which he said: "Excuse my anxiety, but how is Dash? Goes he muzzled, or *apertore*? Are his intellects sound, or does he wander a little in his conversation? You cannot be too careful to watch the first symptoms of incoherence. The first illogical snarl he makes, to St. Luke's with him. All the dogs here are going mad, if you believe the overseers; but I protest they seem to me very rational and collected. But nothing is so deceitful as mad people to those who are not used to them. Try him with hot water. If he won't lick it up, it is a sign he does not like it. Does his tail wag horizontally or perpendicularly? That has decided the fate of many dogs in Enfield. Is his general deportment cheerful? I mean when he is pleased, for otherwise there is no judging. You can't be too careful. Has he bit any of the children yet? If he has, have them shot, and keep him for curiosity to see if it was the hydrophobia."

Goldsmith had a dog about which Sir Joshua Reynolds tells the following story. Calling upon the poet one day, he found him in the double occupation of turning a couplet and teaching a pet dog to sit upon his haunches. At one time he would glance his eye at his desk, and at another shake his finger at the dog to make him retain his position. The last lines on the page were still wet; they form a part of the description of Italy:

By sports like these are all their cares beguiled;  
The sports of children satisfy the child.

Illustrations of the faithfulness of dogs might be quoted in abundance. The

Ettrick shepherd, James Hogg, says of the shepherd's dog: "He will follow his master through any hardship, in hunger and fatigue, without murmuring or repining, till he literally falls down dead at his feet."

Hector, one of the poet's own dogs, once carried fidelity to an extreme. A dark and pouring night prevented his seeing that the lambs were already safely shut in on every side, and so, hungry, worn-out, and cold, his eyes steadily fixed on his charge, he remained till the break of day. Well might Hogg write:

Man, here is ane will haud ye dear;  
Man, here is ane will ne'er forsake ye!

No wonder that some men leave money for the support of their four-footed friends. Among the curiosities of wills, the case has been noticed of Mr. Berkely, of Knightsbridge, who died in 1805. He left thirty pounds to four of his dogs. During a journey through France and Italy, this gentleman, being attacked by brigands, had been protected and saved by his dog. The four animals he pensioned in his will were the descendants of this faithful friend. Feeling his end near, Mr. Berkely desired that two armchairs might be brought to his bedside, and, his four dogs being seated on them, he received their last caresses, which he returned with the best of his failing strength, and died in their paws. By an article in his will, he ordered that the busts of his four dogs should be carved in stone and placed at four corners of his tomb.

Dr. Johnson and Southey were fond of cats. Southey declared that no house is properly furnished without a child rising three years and a kitten rising three weeks. Lord Chesterfield left a sum of money for the support of his favourite cat. Prince Krapotkine, like other famous captives, has a prison pet—a cat, which has been a gaol-bird almost from its birth, and has grown to be a great favourite with the Prince. Like Sir Walter Scott's cat, this cat can do everything but talk. "For instance, when it wants my door opened," remarks the Prince, "it does not mew, it stretches itself to its full length and shakes the latch with its paw. If the door had another kind of fastening, it would certainly open it by raising the latch. It knows perfectly well the meaning of all the bells which ring in the prison—that to bid the inmates rise in the morning, that which sounds before soup is served. Its dictionary is very limited, but it understands perfectly the meaning of the words it knows. Thus, in the evening when I walk into my room, it

performs all sorts of gambols, and by making certain special sounds, endeavours to make me play with it at hide-and-seek—it plays this game exactly as children do, and insists that each party should hide in his turn—or to draw a string along for it to run after. If, in reply to its invitation to play, I say to it, 'What do you want? Food? Drink?' it is displeased, and goes with a sulky air to sit behind my little stove. But when I say, 'The string?' it replies immediately by two sounds, concerning the affirmative tone of which there can be no doubt. I could relate other instances of sagacity, but I do not wish to appear to impose upon the credulity of your readers. There is, however, an interesting point which it would be well to have cleared up. Are cats susceptible to music? Without being able to affirm positively, I believe they are. When my cat was little it several times seemed to us that it found a real pleasure in listening to some air of a pleasing cadence; for example, the waltz from Faust, provided that it was sung by a very high and pure voice. We even thought that music caused it to assume almost a sentimental air. It is unnecessary to say that my cat, like all others, is very susceptible to caresses, and, for I must confess its faults, to flattery. In general, cats are less intelligent than dogs, but by care and attention their intelligence can be highly developed. I am sorry that I have not sufficient time, or I should undertake the education of my cat by a system of cards, as proposed by Lubbock."

The fondness of the late Charles Dickens for animals was a striking feature in his character, and is well shown in some of the most amusing and characteristic of his letters.

Cowper's chief pets were hares. Their names were Puss, Tiney, and Bess, and many references occur to them in his letters. As the hare is the most timid of animals, the question naturally arises, how did he tame them? "Puss," he tells us in one letter, "was tamed by gentle usage; Tiney was not to be tamed at all; and Bess had the courage and confidence that made him tame from the beginning. I always admitted them into the parlour after supper, where the carpet afforded their feet a firm hold; they would frisk, and bound, and play a thousand gambols, in which Bess, being remarkably strong and fearless, was always superior to the rest, and proved himself the Vestris of the party. One evening, the cat being in the room, had the



hardiness to pat Bess upon the cheek, an indignity which he resented by drumming upon her back with such violence that the cat was happy to escape from under his paws, and hide herself." The poet has put into rhyme some account of his pets, under the title of Epitaph on a Hare. Although Tiney was the most unruly of the three, he appears to have been held in the greatest respect by his master, who wrote:

Here lies, whom hound did never pursue,  
Nor swifter greyhound follow;  
Whose foot ne'er tasted morning dew,  
Nor ear heard huntsman's halloo.

Old Tiney, surliest of his kind,  
Who, nursed with tender care,  
And to domestic bounds confined,  
Was still a wild jack-hare.

According to Southey, these hares interested Cowper for nearly twelve years, when the last survivor died of old age. "He has," remarked his biographer, "immortalised them in Latin and in English, in verse and in prose. They have been represented in prints and cut on seals, and his account of them, which in all editions of his poems is now appended to their Epitaph, contains more observations than had ever before been contributed towards natural history of this inoffensive race. He found in them as much difference of temperament and character as is observable in all domestic animals, and in men themselves. . . . To one of these hares, that had never seen a spaniel, Cowper introduced a spaniel that had never seen a hare, and because one discovered no tokens of fear, and the other no symptom of hostility, he inferred there is no natural antipathy between dog and hare—a fallacious inference, for a dog in its wild state, which is its natural state, is a beast of prey." Cowper's pets were not confined to hares. He had two spaniels, called Beau and Marquis, and a cat which, like other cats, was in the habit of retiring to strange nooks to sit and think. Hence the poet wrote:

I know not where she caught the trick.  
Nature, perhaps, itself had cast her  
In such a mould philosophique,  
Or else she learnt it of her master.

A few pigeons and a couple of goldfinches, Tom and Dick, made up the roll of Cowper's pets, Goldfinch Dick being the subject of the little poem entitled The Faithful Bird, relating how he escaped from his cage, but finding Tom would not follow his example, he

A prison with a friend preferred,  
To liberty without,

and made no use of the freedom he had won.

Charles Reade appears to be the only other author who made pets of hares. A correspondent, who knew him well, saw him in his garden at Shepherd's Bush with nearly a dozen tame hares gambolling at his feet. "It recalled Cowper," he writes; "but Reade, unlike Cowper, was a man of resolute will and masculine mind." But the Rev. Compton Reade notes a striking difference between the love of the poet and the love of the novelist for their pets. "My uncle," he says, "latterly was fond of animals, but not with the sort of poetic love for them displayed by Cowper. I question whether a keen sportsman, as Charles Reade was in his prime, ever develops the sort of tenderness of poets, besides which, though he was by fits and start charitable and even generous, his was never a sympathetic nature, but he was whimsical and capricious, with an amazing spice of eccentricity in his composition. Years before he wrote a line his rooms in the purlieus of Leicester Square swarmed with squirrels; and long afterwards, when at Albert Gate, where his garden ran to the fringe of the Park, he had a brace of hares and two gazelles. But these pets did not live. It was at Shepherd's Bush that he collected a number of Belgian rabbits, not of hares. But they were wild and burrowed in the garden. Latterly I don't think he cared for them. They used to sleep, by-the-bye, in the same cupboard with his two small dogs, and their only enemies were cats. Cowper's hares were, if I remember rightly, not only pets but companions, and lived indoors; whereas Charles Reade's hares and rabbits were kept out of doors, and only saw their master occasionally." At one time he owned a dog which looked like a sheep and thought like a Christian. Half-a-dozen times a day it would jump up on his table as he was writing, hold out one paw, and patiently wait until its master had gravely shaken it, and pronounced the formula, "How do you do, Sir? You must excuse me to-day, as I am very busy." Then the dog would jump down, and would remain perfectly quiet.

The bird occupies a very prominent place in literature, and a short time ago Mr. Phil Robinson published a very amusing and entertaining volume on the treatment of birds by English poets. Some idea of the copiousness of his researches may be gathered from the fact that no fewer than thirty pages are devoted to the lark alone, but although poets have sung the praise

of birds, it cannot, for obvious reasons, be said that they have shown the same affection for them as for dogs. Only two instances occur to us in which an author has made a pet of a bird. The first case is that of Christopher North's sparrow, and second, that of Michael Davitt's blackbird. Mrs. Gordon, in her biography of Christopher North, tells the following story of his sparrow: "I remember a hapless sparrow being found lying on the door-steps, scarcely fledged and quite unable to do for herself. It was brought into the house, and from that moment became a protégée of my father's. It found a lodging in his room, and before long was perfectly domesticated, leading a life of uninterrupted peace and prosperity for nearly eleven years. It seemed quite of opinion that it was the most important occupant of the apartment, and would peck and chirp when it liked, not unfrequently nestling in the folds of its patron's waistcoat, attracted by the warmth it found there. Then, with a bolder stroke of familiarity, it would hop upon his shoulder, and, picking off some straggling hair from the long locks hanging about his neck, would jump away to his cage, and, depositing the treasure with an air of triumph, return to fresh conquests, quite certain of welcome. The creature seemed positively influenced by constant association with its master. It grew in stature and began to assume a noble and defiant look."

Not less interesting is the account Mr. Michael Davitt, the founder of the Irish Land League, gives us of his prison blackbird. His book, entitled *Leaves from a Prison Diary*, takes the form of lectures to his pet blackbird, Jo, to whom these prison jottings are affectionately dedicated, "In memory of a little confiding friend, whose playful moods and loving familiarity helped to cheer the solitude of a convict cell."

"I was remitted," the author tells us in his preface, "to Portland Prison, on the 3rd February, 1881. Shortly afterwards, through the kindness of the governor, a young blackbird came into my possession. For some months I relieved the tedium of my solitude by efforts to win the confidence of my companion, with the happiest results. He would stand upon my breast as I lay in bed in the morning, and awaken me from sleep. He would perch upon the edge of my plate and share my porridge. His familiarity was such that on showing him

a small piece of slate-pencil, and then placing it in my waistcoat-pocket, he would immediately abstract it. He would perch upon the edge of my slate, as it was adjusted between my knees, and watching the course of the pencil as I wrote, would make the most amusing efforts to peck the marks from off the slate. He would fetch and carry as faithfully as any well-trained dog. Towards evening he would resort to his perch, the post of the iron bedstead, and there remain silent and still till the dawning of another day, when his chirrup would again be heard, like the voice of nature, before the herald of civilisation—the clang of the prison-bell at five o'clock. One evening, as Jo sat upon his perch, it occurred to me to constitute him chairman and audience of a course of lectures; and with him constantly before me as the representative of my fellow-creatures, I jotted down what I have substantially reproduced in the following pages." Davitt rewarded his blackbird by setting it free at the conclusion of his last lecture. "I opened his door with a trembling hand, when quick as a flash of lightning he rushed from the cage with a wild scream of delight, and in a moment was beyond the walls of the prison! The instinct of freedom was too powerful to be resisted, though I had indulged the fond hope that he would have remained with me. But he taught me the lesson which can never be unlearned by either country, prisoner, or bird, that nature will not be denied, and that liberty is more to be desired than fetters of gold."

Frank Buckland did not confine his love to any particular animal. With the eye of a naturalist he could see beauty in all creatures; but, in his account of his pet rat, he gives another reason for the peculiarity of his taste. "I owe a great deal to rats," he remarks in his *Notes and Jottings from Animal Life*. "When a student at St. George's Hospital I wrote an article on rats, which I sent to a magazine, and, to my great amazement, the publishers sent me a cheque for it. From that moment I have taken a great liking to my first patrons in literature—viz., rats; and I always somehow connect them in my memory with publishers. I have for the last twenty years never been without a tame rat. I almost forget where the rat I am writing about came from. I believe he was one I rescued from an untimely end by being swallowed by the ant-eaters at the Zoological Gardens. He has now lived for four years and longer in a squirrel's-

cage at one end of the mantelpiece, while the other is ornamented by a corresponding squirrel's-cage, containing a sick marmoset, which answers to the name of Judy. Both Judy and the rat being nocturnal animals, remain all day long coiled up in their respective cages. When the gas is lighted at night Judy comes out of her cage and bows to the rat, while the rat comes out of his cage, and, lifting his white nose in the air, nods in a supercilious manner to Judy."

Even rats are not without their good qualities. Miss Frances Power Cobbe tells us a story of a French convict who was reformed by a rat—a man who was long the terror of prison authorities. Time after time he had broken out, and made savage assaults on his gaolers. Stripes and chains had been multiplied year after year, and he was habitually confined in an underground cell, whence he was only taken to work with his fellow-convicts in the prison-yard, but his ferocity long remained untamed. At last it was observed that he grew rather more calm and docile, without apparent cause for the change, till one day, when he was working with his comrades, a large rat suddenly leaped from the breast of his coat, and ran across the yard. Naturally, the cry was raised to kill the rat, and the men were preparing to throw stones at it, when the convict, hitherto so ferocious, with a sudden outburst of feeling implored them to desist, and allow him to recover his favourite. The prison officials for once were guided by happy compassion, and suffered him to call back his rat, which came to his voice, and nestled back in his dress. The convict's gratitude was as strong as his rebellious disposition had hitherto proved, and from that day he proved submissive and orderly. After some years he became the trusted assistant of the gaolers, and finally was killed in defending them against a mutiny of the other convicts. The love of that humble creature finding a place in his rough heart had changed his whole character. Who shall limit the miracles to be wrought by affection, when the love of a rat could transform a man?

Charles Kingsley taught his children to respect even the most loathsome creatures. "On the lawn," remarks Mrs. Kingsley, "dwelt a family of natter-jacks (running toads), who lived on from year to year in

the same hole in the green bank, where the scythe was never allowed to approach. He had two little friends in a pair of sand-wasps who lived in the crack of the window in his dressing-room, one of which he had saved from drowning in a hand-basin, taking it tenderly into the sunshine to dry; and every spring he would look out eagerly for them, or their children, who came out of, or returned to, the same crack. The little flycatcher, who built its nest every year under his bedroom-window, was a constant joy to him. He had also a favourite slow-worm in the churchyard, which his parishioners were warned not to kill from the mistaken idea prevalent in Eversley that slow-worms were poisonous. All these tastes he encouraged in his children, teaching them to love and handle gently, without disgust, all living things—toads, frogs, beetles—as works and wonders from the hand of a living God. His guests were surprised one morning at breakfast, when his little girl ran up to the open window of the dining-room, holding a long, repulsive-looking worm in her hand. "Oh, daddy, look at this delightful worm."

That daring special correspondent, the late Mr. E. O'Donovan, relieved the monotony of captivity at Merv by gathering around him a number of strange pets. They included a beautiful specimen of the antelope of the plain, a gerfalcon, three young jackals, two black cats, and a hedgehog!

But one thing is clear—that our greatest writers set an example in respect to the treatment of animals which we should like more generally followed. Mr. Edward Byron Nicholson wrote, a few years ago, a new essay in ethics, entitled, *The Rights of an Animal*, which sets forth, without exaggeration, that man's duty to his neighbour extends to the lower animals, even to those who possess only the slightest capacity for feeling pleasure or pain.

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THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

## CHARLES DICKENS

No. 868. NEW SERIES. SATURDAY, JULY 18, 1885. PRICE TWOPENCE.

### ONLY A BUSINESS MAN.

By MAY DRYDEN.

#### CHAPTER XX.

SUMMER was nearly at a close now. The evenings were beginning to draw in, and chilly folks to think it time to light their fires.

It had been a summer full of pleasure to the young Carfields, who had, with only one exception, enjoyed it to their hearts' content. That exception was Daniel.

The very baby himself had profited by the friendship of his brothers and sisters with Clarence and Gordon, and never wearied of lisping long tales of the delightful adventures he had in the big hay-field beside the little black-and-white house, where, day after day, Phoebe turned him in to play, knowing that nothing very dreadful could happen to him in the safe, level field. Here, too, Clarence would often come; sometimes rejoicing the baby-mind with her inexhaustible store of nursery-ales; sometimes tempting the baby-palate with dainties hitherto all unknown to it; sometimes, if the truth must be known, encouraging the little lad to chatter about his elder brother and sister, whom she admired more and more, as she saw the reverence and love the younger ones had for them.

The truth was that Phoebe had fallen into the hands of a genuine Good Samaritan. There are some such in the world, though they be few and far between. People who cannot pass by on the other side and leave behind a neighbour wanting, whether it be for food or friendship; philanthropists, who distribute, not gold only, but good deeds, and good words, and good will to those who need. Who can say how often it happens that the latter are far more welcome than the former?

It was not necessary that people's bodies should be starving before Gordon and Clarence Fenchurch felt bound to help them.

They could no more have refused kindly sympathy to an overwrought mind and spirit than they could have turned away a hungry little child from their door. The latter was an utter impossibility to both of them.

Clarence manoeuvred carefully to help Phoebe in such a way as not to hurt her pride, of which she had a good share.

So a new delight crept into the matron-sister's quiet life—a delight about which she did not care to question herself too much; but at which she wondered sometimes, pondering gravely over its strangeness, and almost grateful that she had not known it before, since now the freshness of it was so sweet.

There had been no break in her quiet happiness during these summer months—no interruption to her peace of mind, save on one occasion, when the meddling officiousness of Mrs. Welsh had separated her from Deborah Leighton for the time being, and excepting a passing uneasiness now and then as to Daniel.

Poor Daniel was learning, for the first time in his life, what it was to care very much for anyone besides himself, and he found the lesson a hard one. He was in love with Clarence Fenchurch, worshipping her with all the force of his passionate and morbid nature. This new experience did not improve him. He was selfish in it, as he had been in every act of his self-seeking existence—cruelly selfish, with regard to one poor little heart which he had crushed remorselessly.

Daniel had thought that he loved his cousin Netta. He had certainly been fond of her. She appreciated him, and, as he

believed, understood his finer feelings. She knew what a genius he was, and what trials his sensitive nature had to struggle against. He had certainly intended to marry her one of these days, when he should be able to keep a wife without inconveniencing himself; and he had taken no pains to conceal his intentions from Netta.

But now——? Well, now this young lord of creation had seen someone who pleased his fancy better than his old love; and so he threw his affection for his cousin off, as he might have cast away a worn-out glove, regardless of her disappointed hopes.

Once, indeed, when on some occasion of special rudeness on his part to Netta, Luke had administered to him a severe rebuke—just that once it had occurred to Daniel Carfield that he was, perhaps, not acting precisely as a gentleman ought to act.

But he soothed his conscience with an oft-repeated fallacy.

"Girls," said he to himself, "do not love as men do; they have not the innate power of divine passion. Netta may feel her disappointment a little; that is not surprising"—and he raised his fine eyes complacently to his toilet-glass—"but she will not suffer as I should, if an unkind fate were to separate me from Clarence."

He had already persuaded himself that Clarence was as deeply attached to him as he was to her, though she had never shown him any mark of special favour. On the contrary, it was only her regard for Phoebe and Luke that induced her to treat him with friendliness even.

He certainly dwelt much on what his feelings would be, should she not love him; but that was only in love-sick poems. In reality, her rejection of him was a contingency he did not for a moment contemplate.

Such was Daniel's state of mind on that memorable Saturday when Peter brought Dick home to tea.

Dick Sanders was precocious in his insight into people's characters—that there was not a doubt about; probably because he had cultivated a habit of observation as being useful to him in his profession, and was of a decidedly sympathetic temperament. His precocity in one respect was, however, more than balanced by his backwardness in others. He was a thorough boy at heart, as was evinced by his partiality for Peter's company, and, though a gentleman in word and deed—capable even, at times, of acting with great tact—he was not more careful to keep out of

mischief than other boys, and sometimes achieved consummate blunders.

This being the case, it was not wonderful, perhaps, that his very first act on Mr. Carfield's premises was fraught with very serious consequences. His cousins were with him, and, as they all three entered the garden, a piece of paper fluttered across the path. Dick's evil genius prompted him to pick it up, and, glancing over it, he put it in his pocket. It evidently amused him, but he declined to show it, and Gordon and Clarence thought no more of it.

After tea, when the older ones were sauntering round the garden, the youthful author produced his little scrap of paper, and gravely asked if the company chose to hear some verses by a love-sick swain which had been committed to his care. Phoebe was absent, busying herself over some not-to-be-neglected household duties, or her tact might even then have averted the catastrophe. As it was, Matty caught the twinkle in Richard Sanders's eye, and, quick to encourage a jest, pressed him to read his poem. To do her justice, she believed it to be his own, and inwardly condemned the egotism that forced his compositions on people who were almost strangers to him.

So Dick read:

"'LINES TO CLARENCE.'"

"Who is your unknown admirer, Clarence?" interpolated he.

"How can I tell, silly boy, if he is unknown?" answered his cousin.

She knew Dick too well, by this time, to be put out of countenance by any verses which he might address to her, and she expected no others on this occasion.

Dick went on reading with much theatrical gesture and emphasis:

"Strangely impenetrable art thou, like the rock  
Wherein with pain we seek a hidden jewel.  
Of thy closed heart will no key fit the lock?  
Oh, sweet my love! Most cruel!"

"Like some poor thief watching a goldsmith's shop,  
I watch the diamonds sparkling in thine eyes.  
Like tiny mouse gathering the crumbs that drop,  
Each word I count a prize."

"I love thee; dost thou know it, sweetheart mine:  
I love thee, as the blackbird loves a worm.  
Caught in thy charms, as in a spider's line,  
Poor fly, I squirm!"

The bathos of the ridiculous lines—for, in truth, they were absolutely ridiculous—thoroughly brought out by Dick's manner of reading them, was irresistible, and, as he finished, all his hearers began to laugh. All but one. Daniel, with

eyes glowing, and voice trembling with passion, confronted Richard Sanders, and spoke :

"Sir, those verses are my property. How dare you meddle with them?"

"Dare!" laughed Dick, not in intention aggravatingly, but, in reality, intensely so to the peevish poet.

Daniel shook with rage, and almost shouted :

"Give them to me at once!"

"Nay; how do I know they belong to you? I think they belong to Clarence. Here, Clarence, will you have your property?"

Just then Phoebe appeared upon the scene.

"Why, Daniel," said she, "what is the matter?"

"Nothing—nothing," answered Clarence quickly. "Give me those verses, Dick, and do not be a donkey!"

Her warning glance and Phoebe's distressed face opened Dick's eyes a little as to what he had been doing.

"There they are," said he. "You must credit me with that last verse, you know. I put it in impromptu. They would have been a very different thing had they been finished by the hand that began them."

Then, turning to Daniel, he added :

"I beg your pardon if I have annoyed you. I hope that you will believe that I did not know, when I found it, that this paper belonged to you."

"Found it!" stormed Daniel. "Do you expect me to believe that? It is some ungentlemanly trick of yours and that little fool Peter's."

Dick's face flushed, but he did not reply, only turned on his heel with a suppressed whistle, as Daniel, his recovered verses in his hand, dashed into the house, and was lost to sight.

"I will go after him," said Luke sternly. "He shall apologise immediately."

"Oh no," said Clarence. "Do leave the poor boy alone. I am sure Dick does not wish him to apologise—do you, Dick?"

"No," said Dick, speaking pleasantly, though with a little effort. "I am awfully sorry to have caused such a disturbance. Clarence, you seem to know him well. Suppose you tell him by-and-by that my offence was unintentional?"

"I will," said Clarence, and presently went indoors with the intention of keeping her word.

## CHAPTER XXI.

CLARENCE found Daniel pacing moodily up and down the dining-room, a black look of wrath still on his handsome face. As he turned towards her, his expression seemed to her so ridiculous in its overdone tragedy that she could hardly refrain from laughing. However, she did not even smile, for she was anxious to set him at his ease again, feeling that for once he really was the aggrieved person. So she spoke to him pleasantly :

"I am a deputation to ask you to rejoin us, Daniel. Will you not come?"

"Miss Fenchurch, for you I would do much. But do not ask me to come out again to-night."

"Nonsense! Why should you not? Believe me, you make too much of the whole affair. Can you not forgive my cousin's silly jest?"

"He is your cousin. I will forgive him, Miss Fenchurch," said Daniel solemnly.

Clarence thought what a foolish prig the boy was, but only said :

"That's a sensible boy. Then you will come out with me now?"

It was an unfortunate speech. Daniel fired up at once.

"Miss Fenchurch," said he, "why do you always treat me as a boy? I am no boy. I am a man, with all a man's passions and feelings, and I will prove it to you."

He came close up to her, and went on speaking.

"Listen to me—nay," as she made a movement to go, "but you shall listen whether you desire to or not. But you will hear me kindly, I know. My darling, you must long since have seen what I would tell you. I love you—I love you, my own!"

Clarence was so taken by surprise by his torrent of words, that she could not move at first; now she raised her hand to check him.

He caught at it, and would have kissed it, but that she drew it coldly away.

"Hush!" said she. "Let me hear no more. You forget yourself very strangely."

"I do; you are right, as you always are. I forget myself, and remember only you. Give me an answer, Clarence, for pity's sake! Do you love me?"

"No!" said she sternly. "Most certainly not. That is my answer."

"You do not! Ah, unsay the cruel words!"

"I repeat them. Of course I do not

love you. I never even liked you, Mr. Daniel Carfield, and your present conduct makes me despise you. It is best I should tell you in plain words what I mean. In my opinion, a man who can intentionally win the heart of a loving and trusting girl, only to fling it away when won, is a man whom no true-hearted woman can ever respect—much less love."

"You are thinking of my cousin Netta," cried Daniel. "Remember that when, in my youthful folly, I thought I loved her, I had never seen you. Blame my fate for that, not me. Who, having seen you, could care for a poor, shallow-minded—"

"Hush—be quiet! For shame!" cried Clarence, as to her horror the door opened, and she saw poor Netta herself, with her pale face full of mute woe, gazing at the scene. The warning had come too late. She had overheard Daniel's last words. The boy had his back to the door, and did not see her. He went on passionately:

"I repeat it: who would care for her, having known you?"

"Are you mad?" cried Clarence, touching his arm, and motioning towards Netta. "Be silent! Oh, my poor child, go away!"

"No, stay there, Netta," cried Daniel, who was really almost beside himself with rage, wounded vanity, and disappointed love. "Stay there, and hear that for you—do you understand!—for you this dearest wish of my heart is denied me! Do you hear?"

Netta stood still, only trembling, and turning, if possible, a shade whiter than before. Her cousin's cruel words struck her to the heart.

Clarence crossed over to her, and put her arm around her. Netta made a feeble movement as though to repulse her, but she would not be repulsed. She spoke again to Daniel, in a voice full of concentrated indignation and contempt:

"Sir, the boyhood which you repudiate is the only possible excuse for your disgraceful loss of self-control. If you have a spark of manhood in you, go and relieve us of your presence."

"I will not go until I have come to an understanding with you. I have a right to an explanation."

"No explanation is necessary. Nothing but conceit could prevent you from seeing that you are not likely, at present, to inspire respect or love."

"If you do not love me, it must be because you love someone else. Is it my

brother—is it Luke who has supplanted me?"

Clarence had nearly lost her self-control, too, now. She answered with scathing scorn:

"Your impertinence, sir, is only equalled by your want of temper."

"Then it is Luke! And you can reject a man of power, and passion, and keen intellect, for a mere clerk in a warehouse! A man who could not put three lines of poetry together to save his life."

Clarence did not condescend to answer him again. Her attention was directed solely to Netta, who she feared every moment would faint in her arms. She was intensely relieved when, as Daniel finished his tirade against Luke, Luke himself entered the room, and, pausing, stood astonished at the extraordinary scene before him.

"You are still indoors then, Miss Fen-church?" said he. "What can be the matter? Tell me what is amiss, Netta dear!"

"Pray take your brother away, Mr. Carfield," answered Clarence quickly. "I believe he has killed this poor child."

"No," said Netta, struggling to compose herself, and stand up; "no; he has not hurt me. He did not mean to hurt me. I must speak to him."

She moved slowly across the room to where he stood, and laid her hand on his arm:

"Daniel dear," she said, "do not mind what they say about me. I am so sorry for you, dear, and I know you did not mean it."

He flung the little beseeching hand off roughly, and—not looking at the gentle, white face, or he could not have spoken so—said:

"What does it matter to me whether you mind or not? It is you who stand between me and my love. I hate you!"

Netta gave one low moan like that of a dumb animal in pain, and sank upon the ground. Nature was more merciful to her than man, and gave her a respite from pain in insensibility. She had fainted.

Clarence sprang towards the poor girl, but Luke was before her. He raised Netta gently in his arms, and laid her on the sofa; then turned to his brother and pointed to the door, saying sternly only one word:

"Go!"

The nature that had been capable of bullying a feeble woman, shrank cowed



before the wrath of a strong man, and Daniel slunk from the room like a hound that has felt his master's whip.

Clarence was kneeling by Netta's side. She looked up at Luke with eyes that were dry, certainly, but glowing with a fire that he had never seen there before—the fire of intense indignation.

"Send Phoebe here, please," said she, "and tell Dick to go home. Gordon must wait for me; I will tell him to explain to you presently."

Luke obeyed, and in a few minutes returned with Phoebe and Matty. Matty had brought remedies with her, and began immediately to administer them, merely remarking that she supposed this was some more of Master Daniel's work, since she had met him on the stairs looking more like a madman than ever. Phoebe guessed a part of what had happened, but was puzzled to account for Netta's share in the matter, not having known that she was in the house. She thought it odd, too, that Clarence would not stay with them until their cousin recovered, but insisted on leaving them at once. Clarence was in some danger of breaking down herself, and, once outside the room, she did give way to a few tears, which would probably have been more had not Luke followed her.

"They do not want me in there," said he. "What does it all mean? Will you not tell me, Clarence?"

She braced herself with an effort. Daniel's words still rang in her ears, and the remembrance of them caused her cheek to flush uneasily at the sound of Luke's voice.

"I will ask Gordon to tell you," said she coldly.

"No; do tell me yourself," he pleaded. "What is it? Have I done anything, Clarence?"

Clarence's sense of justice, which was very strong, forced her to admit that Luke had not done anything, and that she had no right to be angry with him because Daniel had behaved badly.

But, as she hesitated, the thought crossed her mind that, though she had no reason to be angry with Luke, she had good cause for anger with herself. Daniel's words gained a fresh sting as she perceived that there had been some truth in them. Her cheek glowed afresh, and she hastened to put an end to the interview. As coldly and shortly as she could, she gave Luke an account of what had happened, suppressing, of course, his brother's allusion to

himself. That allusion had hurt her more than she knew at the time.

Just then all thought of self was swallowed up in her pity for Netta. Now the words recurring to her showed her a feeling in her heart, the existence of which she had not recognised before. She felt that she had an internal enemy to guard against, and she said good-bye to Luke in a manner so restrained as to add to his distress and bewilderment.

All that night poor Netta Heard was very ill. When her cousins found in the morning that Daniel had left the house, and gone away without telling anyone whither, they did not dare to let her know of his departure.

#### A LITTLE MORE PLANT LORE.

IN our article on "Plant Lore" of a fortnight ago, brief mention was made of the mandrake. So much legendary lore and so many strange fables have had their origin in this gruesome root, that we may well devote some more space to the "Devil's Candle," as the Arabians call it, and endeavour to trace if any and what analogy there be between it and the mandragoras of the Greeks, and the Soma of the Indian mythology.

The mandrake is so called from the German mandragen—"resembling man." At least, so says Professor Dyer; but we confess that this derivation does not quite content us. The botanical name is *Mandragora officinalis*, and sometimes the May-apple, or *Podophyllum peltatum*, is also called mandrake, but the actual plant of fact and fancy belongs to the *Solanum*, or potato family.

Although one may doubt if the English name be really derived from the German mandragen, it is certain that the Germans have long regarded the plant as something uncanny. Other names which they have for it are *Zauberwurz*, or Sorcerer's Root, and *Hexenmännchen*, or Witch's Mannikin; while they made little dolls or idols from it, which they regarded with superstitious veneration, and called *Erdmann* or Earthman. The story of the mandrake which a Leipzig merchant sent to his brother in Riga, "for luck," was told in our previous article.

Yet in other places, according to the same authority, the mandrake was popularly supposed to be "perpetually watched over by Satan, and if it be pulled up at

certain holy times, and with certain invocations, the evil spirit will appear to do the bidding of the practitioner." A common superstition once, in the South of England, was that the mandrake had a human heart at its root, and, according to Timba, it was generally believed that the person who pulled it would instantaneously fall dead; that the root shrieked or groaned whenever separated from the earth, and that whoever heard the shriek would either die shortly afterwards or become afflicted with madness.

To this last superstition there is direct reference made by Shakespeare in *Romeo and Juliet* :

And shrieks like mandrakes torn out of the earth,  
That living mortals hearing them run mad.

Frequent allusions to this superstition are to be found in the old poets, although it is held by some that the effects claimed for decoctions of the mandrake really refer to those of the nightshade. This confusion has certainly arisen at times, but the most general idea concerning mandrake was that it was a stimulant rather than a narcotic. It is true that Shakespeare regarded mandragora as an opiate, for he makes Cleopatra to exclaim :

Give me to drink mandragora,  
That I might sleep out this great gap of time  
My Antony is away.

And, again, when in *Othello* he makes Iago say :

Nor poppy, nor mandragora,  
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,  
Can ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep  
Which thou owedst yesterday.

But, on the other hand, we find Apuleius—himself, by the way, not unsuspected of magical arts—writing that when the root of the mandrake is steeped in wine it produces vehement intoxication. The same idea is reflected in Mrs. Browning's *Dead Pan* :

In what revels are ye sunken  
In old Ethiopia?  
Have the Pygmies made you drunken  
Bathing in mandragora,  
Your divine pale lips that shiver  
Like the lotus in the river?

And there can be little doubt that the mysterious "Lhasis," referred to by Sir William Davenant—a word whose etymology is so obscure—is nothing else than the mandrake or mandragora. If so, then we see that the plant was valued for its exciting and stimulating effects rather than as an opiate.

Many commentators, and most dictionaries, dispose of Reuben's mandrakes as

something altogether different from the plant now known by the name. But there is really no warrant for such a conclusion. The *Mandragora officinalis* is quite common in Celicia, Syria, and elsewhere in the East, and is easily identifiable with the root of Baaras, which Josephus describes in the Wars of the Jews. This root, he says, is in colour like to that of flame, and towards the evening it sends out a certain ray like lightning. It is not easily to be pulled, it will not yield quietly, and it is certain death to anyone who dares pull it, unless he hang it with the head downwards. As to the uses of the root, Josephus continues: "After all his pains in getting it, it is only valuable on account of one virtue it hath, that if it only be brought to sick persons, it quickly drives away those called Demons, which are no other than the spirits of the wicked, which enter into men that are alive, and kill them, unless they can obtain some help against them," and the root was a useful stimulant, although in Baaras, at any rate, it seems to have lost its reputation as a love-philtre. It is noteworthy that Josephus also tells how Solomon had great skill in enchantments, and cast out devils by means of a root, an accomplishment he is said to have learned from some of the numerous foreign ladies with whom he surrounded himself.

Now it is interesting to turn from the old Jewish historian to the old English herbalist, Gerarde, who, in 1597, wrote in his *Herball* pointing out how, by "the corruption of time and the error of some," mandragora has been mistaken for what he calls *Circaea*, or *Enchanter's Nightshade*. But of the mandrake, or mandragoras, Gerarde says: "There hath been many ridiculous tales brought up of this plant; whether of old wives, or some runagate surgeons, or physickmongers, I know not; but sure some one or more that sought to make themselves famous or skillful above others were the first brokers of the error" that the root resembles a man. "They add further," he says, "that it is never, or very seldom to be found growing naturally, but under a gallows, where the matter that hath fallen from the dead body hath given it the shape of a man, and the matter of a woman the substance of a female plant; with many other such doltish dreames. The fable further affirms that he who would take up a plant thereof . . . he should surely die in short space after."

This is clearly Josephus's "root of Baaras" over again. Gerarde further holds it to be the identical mandragoras of the Greek, and called *circaea* because it was used by Circe for love-potions and enchantments. If this be so, then what was the "moly" given to Odysseus by Hermes wherewith to counteract the charms of Circe? Was it a totally different plant, or was it merely the same applied on the homœopathic principle? Mr. Andrew Lang thinks they cannot be the same, because the "moly" is described by Homer as having a black root and a white flower, while the mandragoras is described by Pliny as having a yellow flower and white, fleshy roots. But we know that Homer is always confusing in the matter of colours, and it is possible that various shades of the purplish flower of the true mandrake might appear to one as white, and to another as yellow. Upon the whole, the probability is that the two names meant one and the same plant, for the characteristics are too peculiar to be alike possessed by different species. If the moly were not mandragoras there is nothing else known to modern botany that it could be, unless it were rue, with which some scholars have sought to identify it, but not, as we think, conclusively.

The learned author of *Pseudosia Epidemica*, or *Vulgar Errors*, at any rate was clearly of opinion that moly and mandragoras were one and the same. He quotes also from Pliny that the ancient way of pulling the root was to get on the windward side of the plant, and with a sword describe three circles about it, at the same time the operator keeping his face turned to the west. The dangers attending the plucking of mandrakes are shrewdly disposed of with the remark that it is "derogatory unto the Providence of God . . . to impose so destructive a quality on any plant . . . whose parts are usefull unto many." The same author mentions the superstition that the mandrake grows under gallows, fructified by the decaying bodies of criminals, that it grows both male and female, and that it shrieks upon eradication. This last idea he derides as "false below confute, arising perhaps from a small and stridulous noise which, being firmly rooted, it maketh upon divulsion of parts." "A slender foundation," he remarks, "for such a vast conception; for such a noise we sometimes observe in other plants—in parsnips, liquorish, eringium, flaccs. and others."

The belief that the root of the mandrake resembles the human figure is characterised by the writer, last quoted, as a "conceit not to be made out by ordinary inspection, or any other eyes than such as regarding the clouds behold them in shapes conformable to pre-apprehensions." It is traceable to the bifurcation of the root; a formation, however, which is frequently found "in carrots, parsnips, briony, and many others." There is no other importance, therefore, to be attached to "the epithet of Pythagoras, who calls it anthropomorphon, and that of Columella, who terms it *semihomo*;" nor to Albertus, "when he affirmed that mandrakes represent mankind with the distinction of either sex." The roots, which were commonly sold in various parts of Europe "unto ignorant people, handsomely made out the shape of man or woman. But these are not productions of nature but contrivances of art, as divers have noted. . . . This is vain and fabulous which ignorant people and simple women believe; for the roots which are carried about by impostors are made of the roots of canes, bryony, and other plants," and the method of manufacture is then explained by the erudite doctor. What we wish to bring out by these quotations is the prevalence of the superstition, and the existence of the German *erdmann*, as matters of common knowledge in the latter half of the seventeenth century.

But the superstition can be traced still later, for as recently as 1810 some of these root-images were to be seen on sale in certain parts of France, and were purchased, we are told, as love-charms. We are told that even now at this very day bits of the *Mandragoras officinalis* are worn by the young men and maidens of Greece to bring them fortune in their love-affairs.

In some parts of England—viz., in Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Somersetshire, the bryony is called mandrake, and a small portion of the root is frequently given to horses among their food to make them aleek and improve their condition, and it is still also sold "for medicinal and other purposes." Yet in other places it is called "Devil's Food," because Satan is supposed to be perpetually watching over it and to jealousy guard its magical properties. It is partly on this account, and partly because of its supposed effect in stimulating the passions, that the Arabs sometimes call the mandrake *Tuphacel-sheitan*, or Devil's Apple, although it is

otherwise known as the Stone Apple. In many parts of Europe, the mandrake is believed to possess, in common with some other plants, the power of opening locks and unshoeing horses.

The belief that the mandrake had some peculiar association with the devil has made it a favourite plant with sorcerers and workers of enchantment in all ages. Lord Bacon refers to it as a favourite in his time, "whereof witches and impostors make an ugly image, giving it the form of a face at the top of the root," and leaving the natural threads of the root "to make a broad beard down to the foot." Mr. Conway, however, says that the superstition rightly belonging to the mandrake was often transferred to other roots—probably in ignorance as to the identity of the real plant. "Thus," he says, "the author of *Secrets du Petit Albert* says that a peasant had a bryonia root of human shape, which he received from a gipsy. He buried it at a lucky conjunction of the moon with Venus" (the reader will not fail to note the reference to the Goddess of Love) "in spring, and on a Monday, in a grave, and then sprinkled it with milk in which three field-mice had been drowned. In a month it became more humanlike than ever. Then he placed it in an oven with vervain, wrapped it afterwards in a dead man's shroud, and so long as he kept it he never failed in luck at games or work." Then we learn from the same author that a German horse-dealer, of Augsburg, once lost a horse, and being poor, wandered in despair to an inn. There some men gave him a mandrake, and on his return home he found a bag of ducats on the table. His wife, however, did not like the business, and persuaded the man to return to give back the root to those from whom he got it. But he could not find the men again, and soon after the house was burned down, and both horse-dealer and wife perished.

The only suggestion from this story is that the mandrake was supposed to bring "devil's luck," although, if so, it is difficult to understand why the erdmanns were so carefully preserved from generation to generation. One German writer, Rist, says that he has seen one more than a century old, which had been kept in a coffin, on which was a cloth bearing a picture of a thief on the gallows, and a mandrake growing underneath.

Coles, who wrote *The Art of Simpling*, in 1656, says the witches use the

mandrake-roots, "according to some, or, as I rather suppose, the roots of briony, which simple people take for the true mandrake, and make thereof an ugly image, by which they represent the person on whom they intend to exercise their witchcraft." But their professions must at times have been even larger, for it is on record that a witch was executed near Orleans, in France, about 1605, who was charged with having kept a living mandrake-fiend, having the form of a female ape!

So much for the mandrake, of which, however, a good deal more might be said did space permit. What we have wished to establish is, that it was identical with the mandragora, and also with the mandragoras of the Greeks; that it was probably also the briony; that superstitions have attached to it in all countries and from time immemorial, which ascribed to it occult virtues; that the powers it exercised varied a good deal according to locality and time, but that two main conceptions have almost universally prevailed—viz, that it was a stimulant, and a potent instrument in affairs of the heart.

What, then, is the Soma, or Homa, of the Hindu mythology—the ambrosia of the Indian gods? It has been the subject of much discussion and some difference among comparative mythologists, but its mythological origin and signification are beyond the scope of the present article. It but suffices to say that Soma was the chief deity among the ancient Hindus—the author of life, the giver of health, the protector of the weak, and the guide to immortality. Once he took upon himself the form of man, but was slain by men and braised in a mortar. The similarity with the Christian legend is remarkable, and the method of death should be borne in mind. After his death, Soma rose in flame to heaven, "to be the benefactor of the world and the mediator between God and man."

One of the articles of faith with the Hindus, therefore, is that they must hold communion with Soma, and they are taught thus to pray to him: "O Soma! thou art the strength of our heroes and the death of our enemies, invincible in war: fulfil our vows in battle, fight for us! None can resist thee, give us superiority! O Soma immortal! May we drink to thee and be immortal like thee!" Mr. Baring-Gould says that the whole legend of Soma is but the allegorical history of the plant *Sarcostemma viminalis*, which is regarded

with passionate love "because of the intoxicating liquor which is derived from its juice. It is regarded as a godsend. The way in which it is prepared is by crushing it in a mortar; the juice is then thrown on the sacrificial flame and so rises to heaven." The same writer tells us that a similar worship prevailed among the Iranians, who called the juice Homa, but they did not ferment it, and although they ascribed to it divine attributes, they did not make Homa a supreme deity. But both with them and with the Hindus, "the partaking of the juice was regarded as a sacramental act, by virtue of which the receiver was embued with a portion of the divine nature."

A more recent writer, the author of Bible Folklore, says that the "old Soma was the same as the Persian Homa, a brilliant god, who gives sons to heroes, and husbands to maidens. The juice of the plant, pounded in an iron mortar, is greenish in colour, and is strained through a cloth and mixed with the sap of a pomegranate branch; the yellow juice is then strained through a vessel with nine holes. Among the Parsees it is drunk, not as by the Brahmins in large quantities by sixteen priests, but in small quantities by the two chief priests, and is thus not intoxicating."

The symbol is confused with the deity, and "Soma is at once the life-giving spring of the juice of immortality, and the juice itself"—a confusion not without analogy in some of the superstitions we have narrated of the mandrake. But of old, Soma was drunk as mead was by the Scandinavians before and after battle. It gave power and good fortune as well as light and happiness, and when elevated into a god was supposed to be the origin of all creation.

Now of the *Sarcostemma* it is to be noted that it belongs to the family of *Asclepiadea*, which have all something more or less "fleshy" looking about some parts of them, which, like the *Apocynæ*, were in the old world credited with medicinal properties, and which are generally acrid, stimulating, and astringent. There are many poisonous members of the family, such as the dog's-bane and wolf's-bane of our own country, favourite plants with the enchanters, while the cowplant of Ceylon is of the same species.

But in Garrett's Dictionary of India it is stated that the Soma of the Vedas is no longer known in India, and the same statement is repeated by many writers. It is

certainly not conclusive that the *Sarcostemma viminalis* was the plant of wondrous virtues that was deified. On the other hand, we find that these ascribed virtues closely correspond with those attributed to the mandrake, and it is known that the Aryan people received many of their ideas and superstitions from the old Jewish tribes. We have seen, further, that belief in the peculiar power of the mandrake in certain directions was a settled belief at a very early period of the Jewish history, and without pursuing the comparison farther than would be quite suitable for these pages, we arrive at the very probable suggestion that the original Soma was neither more than less than the mandrake of Reuben, the "Baaras root" of Josephus, the mandragoras of the Greeks, the moly of Homer, the mandragora of Shakespeare, the mandragen of Germany, and the mandrake, again, of England.

#### ALDRIDGE'S.

Few of the busy corners of London are more interesting in their way than the crossing by St. Martin's Lane and Long Acre, where many different lines of traffic meet and intersect, while yet no particular class predominates, of human or of equine passengers. St. James and St. Giles here meet on an equal footing; and, if now and then a poor cab-horse founders on the slippery pavement, the same fate may attend the high-stepping bay of the young Marquis of Corinth, as he drives along in the new curricula, fresh from the coach-maker's shop in Long Acre.

Time out of mind there have been coach-makers, and those who deal in coach-makers' wares, on the strip of ground which lying just along the north side of the wall of the old Convent Garden, was a good furrow long from end to end and narrow in proportion—a strip of land that the Saxon hind may have ploughed with his span of oxen, while fat monks watched him at work as they looked over the garden-wall. A place for wheelwrights, for cartwrights, for bridlesmiths, and loriners; and so, with the progress of luxury and refinement, the favoured haunt of admittedly the best carriage-makers in the world.

And it is not rash to assert that somewhere about St. Martin's Lane there has been from the same antiquity a mart of horses of some kind. Strangely tenacious of prescription in this way are buyers and

sellers of horses, and often enough in the outskirts of some old walled town, where the walls and gates have long since disappeared, horse-dealers trot their horses, whoop, and crack their whips, on the same ground as formerly when tower, and battlements, and the strong portcullised-gate looked upon the scene, and soldiers watched the courses and criticised the paces from the city-wall. In this way the Barbican, just outside the London Wall, came to be, as it is now, a place for horse-sales. And so Smithfield, where, when it was an open market, poor foundered jades would be sold for a few pounds, or even shillings, is described by FitzStephen in the thirteenth century as a celebrated rendezvous of fine horses brought thither to be sold. Thither came Earls, Barons, Knights, and a swarm of citizens; races were run there, and the course was cleared with shouts. In like manner St. Martin's Lane, just beyond the precincts of the Court, and the more or less fortified boundaries of the liberties of Westminster, has always been haunted by the cognoscenti in horsecflesh. And here, in sight of the winding lane, with its dull red houses and unpretentious shops, above which rises the tower of St. Martin's Church, showing white against the London haze, we may fancy we see the horse-dealers of a former age dashing up and down with a Spanish jennet, or perhaps a heavy Flemish coach-horse on sale, while a select audience of country gentlemen and City knights, with, mayhap, a courtly physician with his gold-headed cane, look on critically and yet with approbation. And turning again to the busy crossing, and its multitudinous, not to say tumultuous, traffic, you may appreciate the wonderful expansion of the world of horses, and wonder whence come these squadrons and battalions of horses moving on in a never-ending procession—whence they come and whither they may be going.

There are busier corners than this in the City, no doubt, when the great heart of London is in full throb; but then there are hours and hours when the great City thoroughfares are as quiet almost as the high-street of a country town. But here the traffic never rests altogether. In the small hours of the morning, the hansoms and broughams of the votaries of pleasure will meet the rumbling waggons piled high with produce for Covent Garden, while the occasional four-wheeler, loaded with port-manteaux and trunks, for an early train—happy travellers! who will see the sun

rise over the misty meadows, or, perhaps, flashing over the broad sea—is in danger of being run into by the light carts of the greengrocers and fruit-dealers, who are dashing in, hoping to get the pick of the market. And then the omnibuses run late into the night, and start early in the morning; while the miscellaneous traffic—railway-vans, parcels-vans, the innumerable vehicles from shops and warehouses, the carriages of the town travellers: the jeweller's brougham with its locks and bars, like a travelling safe; the britchka of the silk-mercier, lined with costly robes; the dog-cart crammed with glove-boxes, with dog-skins, as a faint reminder of its original purpose—all these and many others running to and fro continually, with costers' carts and country pony-chaises threading their way among the lines of more ponderous vehicles, are but a sample taken at random from this moving world on wheels. And the horses who are the moving spirits in all this whirligig—what a great army of horses goes to make up the display!—their ranks constantly thinned by casualties, reduced by disease, and by the terrible wear and tear of the hard roads, the constant stoppages, the strain on muscle and nerve, the chafing harness, the harsh curbs, and the stinging whip ever cracking behind them. And yet the strength of the force is kept up—not without difficulty, perhaps, for the home supply is quite unequal to the demand. English farmers have nearly given up breeding horses, and stud-farms are rarely profitable undertakings. But everywhere in horse-breeding districts on the Continent, the British dealer is to be met with. His voice may be heard at Norman fairs, among the blue blouses and balloon-like silk caps of the natives, or among the Flemings and the Dutch, or even with the sonorous Spaniards, the original horse-dealer of the old world, among the dusty plains of Castille. Our business, however, is not with these, who are among the Corinthians of the trade, but rather with the motley crowd which congregates about any well-established repository for the sale of horses—such as that famous one close by, which has been known for more than a century as Aldridge's.

On an ordinary day, Aldridge's is quiet enough. Sometimes a horse is being shown to a possible purchaser, or a coach-proprietor is looking round to find an animal that will suit him. But let Wednesday morning come, when the season is on for

sales, and the whole place is full of life and bustle. Outside in the lane a miscellaneous string of vehicles is drawn up by the kerb—hansoms and dog-carts, with a Stanhope phaeton plastered with the mud of country lanes, that has dried and been coated afresh over and over again: a phaeton that has seen better days, with its plated mountings shining through the dirt like a touch of gentle breeding in one reduced to the lowest depths of misery.

"Yes, I was a gentleman once," said a shadow of a man with a dirty face, and foul, battered hat, and a long, thick greatcoat—this hot, shimmering summer day—held together by string, and quite pitiable in its patchwork of faded colours. "I've driven my four-in-hand with the Coaching Club. Well, horses have brought me low, but I shall stick to 'em to the last."

"That's right, old man," said his companion, a bullet-headed fellow more respectably dressed, but who had evidently risen to his present position of horse-keeper from a still lower grade; "when you had the pieces you spent them like a gentleman, and was always ready to treat a poor chap to a drink."

There are plenty of these broken-down gentry to be met with about a horse-sale, ready to fetch and carry and do any odd commission for the more prosperous dealers, and some of these hang about the big gates of Aldridge's waiting for a friend, or looking out for a horse that never makes its appearance. But there are others, quite as eccentric in attire, who are full of business and importance, ready to start with a bid for any animal that may be put up, and able, on occasion, to pull out a bag of coins from some corner of their ragged garments. Here is one outside who has quite a jaunty look in his well-brushed paletot of ancient cut, and who only betrays his parsimony in his broken boots. He is a commission-agent among the costers, and if he can pick up a pony at a low figure, no matter what its condition, he knows a customer out of whom he can make a few dollars. And there are people with sufficient confidence in him to lend him the purchase-money.

Entering the wicket-gate at Aldridge's a busy scene meets the eye. Within is a long covered yard, with stables opening on either hand, and a gallery devoted to carriages on sale; a plain, substantial building of a sober, brownish-yellow tint, that is repeated in the soft gravel under the feet. The yard, or, as it may be called

with equal propriety, the hall, is well filled with a motley crowd—motley, that is, in character and physique, for as regards apparel the prevailing hue is quiet and sombre enough, faded brown and well-worn drab, the fancy of the wearers expressed chiefly in hats, of which very few are of the conventional stovepipe variety, and those few curly of brim and low of crown, and generally of the florid Corinthian order. But every other variety of head-gear is here to be seen, from the tall conical felt hat of other days, that recalls the Puritan Fathers, to the miserable low-crowned pot of the present period. But if colour is quite absent from the assemblage there is plenty of form in the cut of the garments—massive seams and abundance of material in the upper works, combined with the tightness of knee and slinness of calf that characterise the horsey man—and an Irish dealer, with a caubeen on his head and a rug wrapped round his shoulders after the fashion of a mantle, rubs against a burly Yorkshireman a head taller and several pairs of shoulders broader than any of the rest.

The strangest element in the crowd is the gipsy; and several of the tribe can be picked out hanging together in groups, and talking confidentially in their strange patois. Petulengro is here to-day, and Tawno Chickno, and the rest of the tribe whom George Borrow has made familiar to us—brown, and lithe, and slender, with their yellow, oriental eyes and a touch of oriental magnificence in their crimson-and-orange bandannas, knotted carelessly round their throats. Elsewhere it has been surmised that the father of horse-dealers, the old Adam of the fraternity, was probably a Spaniard; but here it may be surmised that he probably had a dash of gipsy blood in his veins. A kind of freshness seems to come over the scene, attendant on the gipsies; a feeling of breezy commons and country lanes, and the blue smoke rising from the group of lowly tents; a feeling enhanced by the smell of hay and the sight of a knowing little fox-terrier, comfortably ensconced on a truss of the same, while a couple of tired countrymen, who have brought up horses, no doubt, from distant parts, are stretched restfully by his side.

There are well-to-do men among the gipsies, with gold ear-rings and finger-rings, and the air of having a bag of golden sovereigns somewhere handy, but there are others who have hardly a shirt to their



backs; but they all chat affably together, as if mere class distinctions were unknown among the brotherhood of the Rommany chals.

More familiar is the everyday type of the London dealers, smart, dapper fellows, with lightly curled whiskers, and garments of fashionable cut, and fitting tight as any glove, with coachmen, and grooms, and a sprinkling of jobmasters, cabmen, and omnibus proprietors.

"Not many left of 'em now, you say, perhaps," suggests a genial horsekeeper, who has something to say to everybody. "The company has swallowed 'em all up, mostly. But there's an old gent now, one of the old sort, owns his 'busses, and his cabs, and his 'osses, and yet with no more pride about him than there is in you or me. Pride! why, bless your heart, he's that humble-minded that he's been known to hail a opposition 'bus rather than ride in one of his own vehicles. Ah, you don't often meet a man like that."

But the auctioneer has appeared in his rostrum in the upper corner of the hall, and the crowd sways back as with a shrill, strident cry, the white-coated stableman brings his horse up with a flourish that is decidedly artistic. It is one of the fine arts indeed, that of showing a horse advantageously, while you would hardly think the dejected, patient-looking animal you saw a moment ago could be the frisky, curvetting animal which arches its neck and waltzes along with so much spirit. Another turn, and, with another wild cry, the attendant dashes down the course with his horse, and back again, when the animal's head is secured tightly in close proximity to the auctioneer's desk. Bang goes the hammer, a sound which makes all the horses wince, while some jump almost out of their skins, and away goes the subject in hand, to be succeeded by another lot in rapid succession.

Our auctioneer does not treat us with the affable urbanity of Mr. Tattersall. He rather rebukes us, and suggests that we are a pretty lot of fellows not to know our own minds, and that he can't waste his time over us; but we take it all in good part, and we feel the horses' legs, and look into their mouths, and watch them intently as they canter down the course. And on the whole we bid pretty briskly. The old gentleman, whose limit is four pounds, makes an offer of three-ten, but is snuffed out by the auctioneer with fifteen pounds, who next knocks him down for seventeen-ten—

the horse, that is, and not the old gentleman—with lightning-like rapidity.

It is necessary to get over the ground quickly, for there are more than two hundred lots to be sold. And in about five minutes a man might become the possessor of a pair of match-horses, a circular-fronted brougham, the harness belonging to the pair, might settle his account, and drive away in his own carriage, engaging a coachman upon the spot—all like the genial old fairy in Cinderella—and all within the compass of two figures, say for ninety-nine pounds nineteen shillings.

All kinds of horses, to suit every man's purse, are disposed of in this manner. A lot of cast Government horses; the surplus stock of London jobmasters; horses imported from Ireland, from Belgium; horses the property of a gentleman, quiet to ride and drive; horses that have been hunted, are quiet in harness, and will carry a lady. All sorts and conditions of horses pass in quick review under the auctioneer's desk.

Then there are carriages. William, with forty pounds in his pocket, may walk into Aldridge's an idle man. He may drive out in half an hour his own horse in his own cab, and, assuming him to have his license all ready, may hail a fare on the spot, and earn his first half-crown before the day is an hour older. Or one could buy a chariot—a real, aristocratic, old-fashioned chariot, swinging on stout leather straps from a strong and massive framework. The original archaic notion of a carriage this, such as was first started about the reign of Elizabeth, with an arrangement of levers and cogged wheels to tighten up the straps; such coaches as lurched through the muddy tracks of olden times, with stout footmen hanging on behind armed with long poles to prise the wheels out of the mud—the origin of the curious poles that footmen still carry sometimes on state occasions. A chariot, too, with an emblazoned hammer-cloth, but a step removed from the tool-box cover on which the coachman sat, but all so wonderfully well preserved; with the old-fashioned drab linings, pockets, and tassels, and arm-rests all complete; that it reminds one of a hoarded guinea still bright and sharp-cut after all the years that have passed since it was coined. But to hoard a chariot, to keep it all fresh in paint and blazonry, and then to send it to be sold at Aldridge's! Now, if Mr. Freeman—not the historian of the Norman Conquest, but the worthy proprietor of Aldridge's—would tell us the history of that chariot it would

be worth while to wait till it is sold—it is No. 196x on the list, and won't be reached just yet.

But our auctioneer has not time for anything of the kind. He will dispose of our famous chariot in half-a-dozen words. "Capital chariot, old-fashioned but good, best maker. What for the chariot?"

And if we had six long-tailed horses to draw it, a coachman in a cabbage wig, and two tall footmen in crimson plush, with pink silk stockings, that chariot should be ours, and we would leave St. Martin's Lane in the lurch and drive away to fairyland.

#### GROWING OLD.

GROWING old! The pulses' measure  
Keeps its even tenour still;  
Eye and hand nor fail nor falter,  
And the brain obeys the will;  
Only by the whitening tresses,  
And the deepening wrinkles told,  
Youth has passed away like vapour;  
Prime is gone, and I grow old.

Laughter hushes at my presence,  
Gay young voices whisper lower.  
If I dare to linger by it,  
All the stream of life runs slower.  
Though I love the mirth of children,  
Though I prize youth's virgin gold,  
What have I to do with either?  
Time is telling—I grow old.

Not so dread the gloomy river  
That I shrank from so of yore;  
All my first of love and friendship  
Gather on the farther shore.  
Were it not the best to join them  
Ere I feel the blood run cold?  
Ere I hear it said too harshly,  
"Stand back from us—you are old!"

#### MAN-EATING AND MAN-SACRIFICING.

OUR European nineteenth century standard of right and wrong is certainly not that of all the world, past or present. For instance, man eats and has eaten man, not only without any conscience of wrong, but with a feeling of performing a solemn duty, a religious rite. And in some nations this taste is so ingrained that no amount of teaching seems able to get rid of it. A man-eating man is as incurable as a man-eating tiger. What a typical story is that of the Tupinamba woman, brought up by the Jesuits of Paraguay, of whom, when she lay a dying, her confessor asked: "Now what would you fancy—some fresh oranges, or half a hicken, or a slice of white bread such as he nobles eat?" She was a great pet of the good father; she had been so docile, such a model Christian. They had had her ever since she was a child, and her

conduct had always been edifying. "No," said she slowly, as her thoughts went back to the wars between her tribe and its neighbours, and the feasts that had followed a successful raid. "No; I'm not long for this world, and if there's anything I could eat, it is the pickings off the head of a young Tupia boy." In face of the after-world the old propensity came out strong as death. Palæolithic man used to eat his brethren; and so used his comparatively highly-civilised successor (we must not say descendant) of the new stone age. In Italy, in the dried-up lakes (terra-mares), which contain remains of the old stone age, one finds human bones not gnawed only, but broken for the sake of the marrow—treated just like the beasts' bones among which they lie. In France it is the same; experts say they can tell the difference between the marks of a rat's or tiger's tooth and of that of a man, and no animal has ever got so far as breaking the bones that it mumbles. In our British barrows there is not the slightest doubt, from the arrangement of the remains, that, when a chief was buried, not only were his slaves killed and buried with him, but that their bodies first furnished out the funeral feast. The horrible old Hellenic myths, such as Tantalus cooking his son Pelops as a meal for gods, and Atreus dishing up his brother Thyestes's children, and asking him to dine off them, are survivals of a time when the man-cooking oven was as much an institution in Greece as it was the other day in New Zealand or in Fiji. Dog does not eat dog; very few animals will devour their own kind, unless, like sows or rabbits, they do it under the influence of terror; but man in this, as in some other matters of conduct, soon got below the brutes, even if he was not a cannibal at the outset.

Two distinct reasons led to the horrible custom. In some cases it began in time of famine, and those who adopted it had not strength afterwards to shake it off. In a far larger number of cases it was connected with religion. And here, as in the case of the old Indian woman, there has been a terrible persistence. What nation has made its fondness for autos da fé proverbial? People have been burnt in the name of the God of Love in England, in France, in Germany; but always the sacrifice has been an outrage on public feeling. The crowd has gathered, but it has looked on with horror at what almost everyone felt to be a sickening sight. In Spain the

crowd at an auto da fé was a great deal more jubilant than that at a bull-fight. There was the same excitement, and, to boot, the consciousness that a good work and acceptable to the Most High was being done. Now in the old world it was the people of Canaanite race, Phœnicians and Carthaginians, who were most given to human sacrifices; and in Spain there is a strong dash of Punic blood. Roman history tells how doggedly the Carthaginians struggled against the Roman power in the land where they had built a new Carthage. It has always seemed to me that the hideous auto da fé was another form of the old offerings to Baal and Melkarth.

St. Jerome hated the Scoti; such of their clergy as he had met were heretics who dared to deny Original Sin. He speaks of Pelagius, the arch-heretic, as "bemuddled with his Scotie porridge"; but he may be right in saying that the Attacotti, a Scotie tribe—some of whom he came across in Gaul—were cannibals. If so, famine had doubtless originally led to what by-and-by became an institution. We have all lately seen how readily shipwrecked sailors give in to cannibalism. Many a whaler in the days before steam could tell a tale of the same sort, which never got into the newspapers. One of the causes assigned for cannibalism among the otherwise gentle islanders of the South Seas is the absence of animal food; another is the privations of crews whose canoes were carried out of their course by currents. They would be as little able to resist the pangs of hunger as the sailors on board the *Mignonette's* boat.

One remembers what Josephus says of the siege of Jerusalem; and in France human flesh was actually sold in the markets in the year of grace 1000-1001. At that time there was in France the cruellest famine that ever desolated the country. The "the day of the Lord" was come, said the clergy; the Thousand Years were ended, and this dispensation was over. The people believed and acted on their belief, unlike a celebrated modern Scotch writer on prophecy, who, just after he had foretold the speedy end of the world, bought a long lease of some improving property. The French did not even till their land. "What is the use," they asked, "when the fashion of this world is to pass away?" And so, as there were no crops, there was no food. The wolves came round, killing hundreds who were too weakened to resist them.

Troyes has the unenviable reputation of having opened a human shambles; in other places it was done on the sly, those who were caught doing it openly being burned alive.

In Tierra del Fuego a good deal of human flesh is eaten, because there is so little else to eat. The climate is perhaps the very worst in the world; there are few birds, and no quadrupeds except foxes, and bats, and a few small rodents. Fishing sometimes fails in winter, and then it becomes a question: "Shall we eat the dogs or the old women?" The dogs are good for catching otters; the old women are good for nothing. It seems cruel to hang them up by the heels over a fire of green wood till they are suffocated, and then to tear them in pieces and devour them; but it would be almost as cruel to let them drop behind and die by the road, as more civilised tribes do with their aged and infirm. At any rate, the Fuegians have no compunction about doing it. A young man was telling the crew of the *Challenger* how his grandmother came to her death, and was laughing as he imitated her twistings and turnings in her agony. That anyone should be disgusted at his story he could not understand. "I am telling the truth," he said, for he thought his hearers were questioning his veracity; their shrinking from the horror of his story never occurred to him.

Eating parents is by no means confined to the Fuegians; it is an old and widespread custom. Herodotus, whose truthfulness they tell us, is being more and more established by every modern discovery, says of the Issedones, a Scythian tribe: "When an old man is on the point of death his relations hurry up their cattle, kill them, and cut them up in bits along with the corpse of the dead man, whom they first solemnly strangle. The mixed meat is eaten at the funeral-feast. Every child is bound to partake of it." The Massagetae, another Scythian tribe, had, we are told, the same custom; and Strabo lays it to the charge of the Irish, who, of course, deny it as strenuously as the Welsh deny Cæsar's charges against the old Britons. "He only wanted," they say, "to set the Roman cockneys gaping. There is as much truth in his tales of British wives with ten or a dozen husbands apiece, and of huge wicker idols full of human beings burned in honour of their gods, as in his travellers' tales about elephants with no joints in their legs, that cannot

get up, poor beasts, when once they have lain down." It may be that Strabo—who knows?—is really more deserving of credit than Cæsar.

I do not remember any modern nation that is accused of pappophagy—i.e., killing grandfathers for the sake of eating them; but the Acumas, on the Amazons, and also some hill-tribes in India, are said to eat with solemn rites the parents whom death has taken from them. From the eating under pressure of want, to the sacrificing to get free from famine, is an easy step. When hungry, the savage, whose views of God are always distorted enough, would be sure to have them still more distorted. "Eating," he would argue, "only satisfies the pressing need. Tomorrow we are as badly off again. How if, by solemnly eating once for all, and offering the rain-god a share, we could cause the fruits of the earth to grow once more?" Read Tennyson's *Victim*, the actors in which, by the way, are not mere savages:

So thick they died, the people cried:  
"The gods are moved against the land.  
Help us from famine, and plague, and strife.  
What would you have of us? Human life?  
Were it our nearest, were it our dearest—  
Answer, oh, answer!—we give you his life."

The land is sick, the people diseased,  
And blight or famine on all the lea.  
The holy gods they must be appeased.

Just as the eating of parents out of piety was a second thought, a hypocritical way of accounting to themselves for what men began to think was not a very creditable proceeding, so the custom of human sacrifices, beginning in a famine-time as an experiment to see if the god was hungry and would condescend to let his worshippers have food as soon as his own appetite should be satisfied, was continued and extended to other things when by some chance it had happened that the killing blight disappeared, or the welcome shower came in answer to the human victim. "It is clear the god likes blood. He gave us plenty of food in return for it. Go to, let us slay a man now that this enemy is threatening us; then will the god surely fight on our side." Anomalous man-eating has gone on at all times; a depraved taste goes back to forms of foulness of which the world at large has got rid. Not long ago there was a case in the papers of a savage in mid-France who used to entice young people into the forest, and kill them with a view to a succession of horrible meals. The mediæval legends of the

were-wolf point to the same practice. The ogre may be the distorted memory of a prehistoric man-eater, though he is probably the ougre, vgar, vngar; the Huns, like other dreaded conquerors, having had to bear the imputation of cannibalism. At the depraved court of Commodus, the most irredeemably bad, perhaps, of all the bad Roman Emperors, we are told that choice morsels of man and woman used to be eaten, not second-hand, as when lampreys in a pond were fattened on slaves, but cut right off the human carcase.

Richard the First's legendary cannibalism was involuntary. Recovering from a fever while engaged in the siege of Acre, he felt an uncontrollable longing for pork; but no pork could be got in that country, where the pig is accounted unclean. What was to be done? The leeches said the king's life was in peril unless his royal will was satisfied, so the cooks undertook to dress the head of a Saracen, spicing it up so daintily that Richard ate of it with great gusto. As the ballad-chronicle has it:

King Richard shall warrant  
There is no flesh so nourissant  
Unto an Englishman,  
Partridge, plover, heron, ne swan,  
Cow ne ox, shepe ne swine,  
As the hede of a Sarrazine.

So much for hunger as a cause of cannibalism. From motives of religion, man in Western Europe went on eating his fellow-man till Charlemagne's time. His edicts are directed against this practice as well as against eating horseflesh, which was also a religious act, the horse being sacrificed to Odin as the man was to the weird gods of the nether world, or, perhaps, to Hertha, the strange yearly sacrifice to whom in the Isle of Rugen was, Tacitus tells us, marked by the drowning in her sacred lake of a number of human victims. The same drownings went on in the old old time in the Tiber; but before the growth of that Rome which our books tell us about, these victims had been replaced by images made of wicker-work. Still, in times of national danger, the Romans, though they more than once forced the Carthaginians to promise to abstain from human sacrifices, themselves gave way to them. When Hannibal was thundering at their gates, they buried alive in the forum a Greek man and woman, and a Gallic man and woman. On the other side of the world, in Japan, the same mitigation of primitive custom had come about. Of old, when a Mikado died, human victims were slain,

though not on such an extensive scale as in Dahomey. Some centuries before we broke into Japan, the slaying of men and women had been compounded for by the burying of a number of life-size images.

I hinted that the notion about eating one's parent being an honourable custom arose at first out of an ingenious fiction; so did the idea, very widely spread in the South Seas, that by eating a hero you became inspired with his heroic qualities. There is something almost sacramental in this way of disposing of a great man; when once you have made up your mind that the gods are fond of human flesh and blood, you, by sharing in the same, are putting in your claim to be godlike.

Man-eating was probably universal in the Pacific archipelago. It may have been learned, as I pointed out, during the long canoe voyages; but it exists among the Dyaks, who have not that excuse. Their head-hunters are by no means always content with carrying away all the heads they can cut off in a neighbouring village; they often celebrate their success (says Carl Bock) by feasting on the decapitated bodies, precluding the feast with a dance, in which everyone wears a wooden mask, shaped like a crocodile's head. Here is religion. The crocodile, the strong creature who carries down the victim as swiftly as sudden death, is a manifestation of the god, and his worshippers put on his likeness when, by eating man's flesh, they are about to show they are of like nature with him.

The French accuse the Black Flags of eating their prisoners, but they themselves have shown such brutality in this Tonquin war, that possibly they may be trying to palliate their own conduct by wrongly accusing their enemies. It is hard to believe in the cannibalism of such gentle creatures as the Tahitians, but the first of Queen Pomare's hereditary names, Aimara, is clearly a survival. It means, "I eat the eye," and points to a day when the royal ancestor of the elegant lady who so charmed Captain Cook and Dr. Solander used to reserve to him or herself that part of the victim.

The Khonds, and most other hill-tribes of India, have long freed themselves from cannibalism, which, by the way, during the most wasting famines, has never been charged against the mild Hindoo. But the Khonds had—and where they can escape the eye of the English collector still have—their meria, a human

victim, generally stolen or bought from the people of the plains, and fattened up, often for years, till the earth goddess should claim a victim. Then, amid the din of tom-toms and big horns, and the howling of a frenzied crowd, the poor creature was cut to pieces alive, and each head of a family hastily secured his morsel, carried it bleeding round his little patch of land, and then reverently buried it in the middle. Though the flesh-hating Hindoo does not eat his fellow-creatures, he has no objection to wall one of them up in a fortress which he wants to make impregnable. A young maid is supposed to be the best for the purpose. Bhurtpore and other strongholds are said to have had their foundations laid in this way. The custom has spread in both directions. It is found in Eastern Europe; what is that church on the Drave, the legend of which says its tower could no-how be raised; each day's work crumbled down during the night; so the architect, enticing his bride to look at what was being done, pushed her in, walled her up, and then finished his building without further hindrance? It is found in China, and, above all, in Burmah, where they say that when Amarapoora, the old capital, dishonoured by the presence of strangers who came to enforce the treaty that took away Rangoon and all the Burmese seacoast, was abandoned, and Mandalay was made the capital, fifty-two people were buried alive under the different gates of the new city, with the view of making them safe against attack.\*

If human sacrifices were celebrated at Carthage with a pomp almost equal to that which horrified the Spaniards in Mexico, man-eating of the grossest kind is found more or less from one end of Africa to the other. One remembers how Stanley, going up the Livingstone river, was met by the cry: "Meat, meat!"—the said meat being man's flesh, as the skulls and thigh-bones showed. Here there was not the excuse of scarcity, for the land was full of rich pastures abounding in cattle. In Kaffirland and farther south are caves full of human bones, the smoke on the roof showing that they have been dwelt in since man knew the use of fire. Were it not that these bones are split for the sake of the marrow, just as in the French bone-caves and in the Scandinavian kitchen-

\* The temple which each king of the Ashantis builds in honour of his predecessor is of clay mixed with human blood. Here, and in Dahomey, the "great customs" rival the Spanish tales about the Mexican sacrifices. Human pity seems absolutely non-existent in either people.

middens, we might fancy that the remains were those of unhappy refugees smoked to death by their relentless enemies, after the plan adopted by Pellissier in Algiers, and by our Natal colonists in the war with Langalibalele, and by the Boers, as a matter of course, whenever one of their "commandos" overtook a tribe that had hidden in the rocks.

But Mexico was, beyond all others, the land of human sacrifices. No doubt the Spaniards exaggerated; Bishop Les Casas says that they did. They wanted an excuse for destroying the whole native society, and making the people hewers of wood and drawers of water. But, all allowance made, too much remains indisputably true. Every god and goddess had a festival of blood, at which the agonies of the victims were gloated over by vast crowds. The heart was torn out and offered to the deity, the face of whose idol was smeared with the warm blood. The Spanish eye-witnesses describe the scene: "They sliced open the poor wretches as one slices a melon," with the *macuahuitl*—a two-handed wooden sword with sharp bits of obsidian set in the blade. The priests and the king had their special portions. If the victim was not a prisoner of war (of war constantly undertaken for the sake of getting victims), but a young Aztec voluntarily offered, the parents received by way of recompense their dainty morsel; the rest was divided amongst the crowd of worshippers. When a prisoner of rank and renown for bravery was sacrificed, with a grim courtesy certain parts were sent to his relations, who acknowledged the gifts by return presents of fine feathers or gold ornaments. The most revolting of many revolting incidents in these ceremonies was that, at some feasts, chosen victims were flayed, and the skin worn by the priests, who, thus clad, says Sahagun, went round, claiming offerings, which no one dared refuse. For these feasts there was the most solemn preparation; the priests fasted rigorously for sixty or eighty days, men and women lived strictly apart for the same time, bleeding themselves occasionally in honour of the god, and abstaining from the baths which formed such an important item in their lives. The number of the victims must have told on the population of the country. Under Montezuma, one thousand two hundred were sacrificed on the "stone of destiny," brought from the Ixcaltan mountains, and set up as an altar. Father Duran is very exact as to

the number killed by Montezuma's predecessor when he inaugurated, in 1487, the great temple of the war god, Huitzilopochtli. He fixes it at sixty-two thousand three hundred and forty-four. Other travellers say about sixty thousand, the number of those who shared in the horrible feast being six millions. At the feast of the fire-god, Xuihteculli, the priest carried the victims to the top of the *teocalli*, and flung them down into a furnace, the crowd, like Spaniards at an auto, or Carthaginians when the children were flung into the red-hot arms of Moloch, watching their agonies with pious edification. A great sacrificial feast was going on where now stands the city of Vera Cruz, at the moment when, in 1518, Juan de Grijalva landed, and struck the knell of the loathsome worship. Writers of Mexican blood have sought to excuse their ancestors because of the lack of domestic animals. But the woods were full of game, and, like the Chinese of to-day, the Mexicans fattened for food dogs of a peculiar breed. That bad priest, Juan de Zumaraga, first Bishop of Mexico, doubtless exaggerated when he estimated the regular yearly tale of victims at twenty thousand; good Bishop Les Casas contradicts him point-blank; but Dr. Hamy's paper (read before the Paris Anthropological Society) based on antiquities preserved in the Madrid Trocadero Museum, and on the *Coleccion de Documentos para la Historia de Mexico*, cannot be gainsaid. When Andres de Tupia and his comrade, Gonzalo de Umbria, tell of a huge tower, built of horizontal beams two feet apart, the interspace being filled with lime, in which were set rows of heads face outwards, the number of heads ("for we counted one row, and then multiplied by the number of rows") being one hundred and thirty-six thousand, one feels there was great exaggeration, but still a basis of fact.

Human heads are the ornament of African village-gates, and of Borneo houses, as they used to be of New Zealand paha. The heads that grin outside our churches have, perhaps, the same origin. Classical Greece and Rome rejected them; they came to us from Central Asia, where baskets full of heads were—till the Russians came—a usual morning present to Khans and Emirs.

The custom, too, of human sacrifice has been spread all over America. Dupratz tells how it was practised by the Natchez, at the death of their

chief, whom they called the Great Sun. They, however, only killed the victims; the Comanches ate them as well. The first colonists of Texas tell of human flesh, ready for cooking, found in camps, out of which the Comanches had retreated. In Brazil there are still at least six cannibal tribes, and others whose custom it is for mothers to eat their dead children, pounding up the bones with maize, the mourning lasting till the last vestige is consumed.

The Peruvians, who may have got their culture from China, were a great contrast to the Mexicans; they only offered now and then a single victim to the sun, and never, so far as I can learn, devoured the sacrifice. They had got rid of the habits of the earliest Americans, in whose kitchen-middens in the north (by Lake Monro, in Florida, and on the coast of Maine) and in the Brazilian prehistoric "Sambaquis," Wyman, and Hardy, and other archaeologists have found the same sort of split and gnawed bones as are found in European and African and Siberian caves. Of course one makes allowance for travellers' tales, for the too-human look of the head bobbing about in a cauldron of Nicaraguan monkey-soup leading the disgusted stranger to put down in his note-book: "I sat at a cannibal feast;" and also for archaeologists mistaking for the remnants of feasts the accumulated bone-heaps made when Indian tribes reburied their dead; for race-hatred laying abominable sins to the charge of enemies—as the old accusation of kneading their paschal-bread with a virgin's blood has been brought just lately against the Jews in Hungary; for exceptional ferocity—as when Juvenal records that in the riot between Coptos and Tentyra, a Coptite, who had got trampled on, was torn to pieces and eaten raw by the Tentyra people; and when in the voodoo ceremonies among West Indian negroes, the chief dancer, wild with excitement, points out a victim—usually a fowl or a kid, but sometimes (as was proved at a trial in 1864 at Port au Prince, when eight of the sect were sentenced to death) a child—which is straightway devoured. But, all allowance made, we must admit that man is a man-eating animal, and that the old custom—like other old customs—dies very hard. It is dying, often with the dying out of those addicted to it. Things are bettering; the African man-hunts, which so vexed Gordon's righteous soul, are bad enough; but better enslave your prisoner,

and send him northward across the Soudan, or pack him off in a dhow to some Arabian port, than sit down and eat him in honour of your god.

I trust our modern archaeologists are right in taking the "rock basins, with channels to let out the blood," so common in the granite of Devon and Cornwall, and the millstone-grit of the North Derbyshire and Yorkshire moorlands, to be merely water-holes caused by the rain-drip. But there is no reason, in the nature of man, why they should not be what the antiquaries (very different people from archaeologists) fancied them. Our burial-clubs used to show, till due precautions were taken, that if our mothers do not eat their dead children, they do not scruple to kill them for a consideration. Indeed, I should not like to answer for English people, any more than for any other people, not turning cannibals in a case where some overmastering superstition gave an edge to actual want.

### A WIRE FRAME.

#### A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

"THE best-laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft a-glee." Perfectly true, Robert Burns; I endorse your sentiment. How often have I come to the same conclusion as I sat by my lonely fire! Here am I, Jeremiah Hawkins, as much of an esquire as most of those so called, by my own deliberate choice a single man, and remaining single for the express purpose of avoiding the cares and worries, and, above all, the endless commissions that make the lives of married men a weariness to them; here am I, persecuted, imposed on—in fact, fairly used up—not only by nieces, cousins, sisters-in-law, and other relatives, but actually, also, by those who are no blood relations at all, and yet act as if they possessed an affinity that, after all, to my mind, is a very doubtful claim on one's services. I wonder, now, what would be an actual advantage in this life. I used to think a home in a village would be something of the kind—away from the hurry and din of a crowded town; but, as time goes on, we find out our own mistakes, and this has been one of mine. I have lived in a village now for some years—a pretty little village in a picturesque neighbourhood, with a reputation for being particularly healthy, and it seems to be for this cause that there is for ever someone wanting "just to look in on me"—that is



the favourite phrase, and it means, so far as I know, a good long visit. Some of my nieces "have outgrown their strength" (they are all quite too tall); Lily, or Jeanie, or one of the rest, "is so pale and washy; a little while in your splendid air would be of such use to them;" or Joe, or Jem, or some of the numerous Jerrys—they seem all to have called their boys after me—"have been cramming for examinations, and they do so require a change." This is the way they go on, and I shouldn't mind having them one at a time, only that I feel they are all just making a convenience of me. I say one at a time, because my second brother's wife, Juliana, came down on me once with her twin babies and nurse, and nearly drove me to subside into lodgings, and leave the house to them until they had done with it.

This, however, is only one phase of the persecution that pursues me, because, as the invaders of my peace take care to assure me, "You are a single man, you know, Mr. Hawkins"—of course I know that, but I don't see what good it's doing me—"and you have plenty of time," or "You have spare rooms in your house, and I just wanted to ask this little favour from you;" and so they go on, and I have not courage to resist them and bring down on myself the reproaches sure to be heaped on me, though I might not hear them.

However, what I am about to complain of, is the annoyance that has come upon me by some neighbours of mine asking me to "do a little commission" for them. These people are merely neighbours, nothing more. They live a little way down the village street, but they are quite as near as I wish them to be, for, as it is, I can't pass my own doorstep without their in some way finding out where I am going, and if it be to town, where business takes me every now and then, no attempt that I can make to baffle them will save me from being asked, "just to do a little commission."

I don't think I'll stand it again; that last commission has been enough for me. The lease of my house is nearly out. My landlord is theirs as well, and if he is going to keep Mrs. Tattleton as a tenant, why, I'll go elsewhere.

Mrs. Tattleton has three unmarried daughters, tall, powerful-looking damsels, all moderately young, and said to bear a strong resemblance to their father, the late Major Tattleton. This warrior, however, had none the way of all the

earth before I, fixing my abode in the village of Hazeldene, became acquainted with his surviving family. They must surely be good young women, these Miss Tattletons, or their mother never could praise them as she does, and she cannot have any hidden motive for extolling them to me, because, from the time I first came to Hazeldene, I have made it known in every way I could, without absolutely advertising the fact, that I am not a marrying man. However, had I wished to marry one, or all, of her daughters, I could not desire fuller information regarding them than Mrs. Tattleton has gratuitously given me. I know all their good domestic qualities, among which, I am assured, economy takes a prominent place, in proof of which their mother has more than once confided to me that "her daughters make their own dresses."

This fact, which, of course, is interesting to those whom it concerns, had been well established in my mind by my having on several occasions been employed to bring them from town fashion magazines or books. I should mention that "town," in Hazeldene parlance means the county-town, and such is the secluded position of our village, that to reach this central point one has to go nearly half a mile to a ferry, cross a river in an open boat, and then make one's way to the railway-station by a ten minutes' walk up a lane. From all this it will be seen that the facilities for communication, so much boasted of as a feature of the present age, are not yet fully developed at Hazeldene.

On returning from my usual walk, one day lately, I found awaiting me a three-cornered note, the appearance of which, even before I touched it, at once brought to me a suggestion of Mrs. Tattleton, which proved to be correct, for inside was written a request from that lady for the pleasure of my company that afternoon at five-o'clock tea.

I could not well refuse, having passed their windows in perfect health an hour before, and they knowing, as well as I did myself, that I had no occupation to hinder me from going anywhere. Mrs. Tattleton seemed sure of my acquiescence, for her note stated that an answer was not required. So when five o'clock was near I strolled leisurely down to their house. Being a November afternoon there was little light, save what came from the shops in the village street which are interspersed with private houses. We are a careful people in

Hazeldene, and don't light our street-lamps too early.

I was apparently Mrs. Tattleton's favoured guest, for there was no other, and I must certainly say in her praise that the tea she offers to a guest is both hot and strong, very different to the watery, luke-warm decoction that makes five-o'clock tea in some houses a snare and a delusion.

The visit passed pleasantly enough, the young ladies and their mother were very agreeable until just before I was coming away, when I was unpleasantly startled by a question from Miss Annette, the second girl. Putting her head on one side, much as a robin does when it is watching for crumbs, she asked me in the most innocent way possible if I were likely soon to be in town. Now, I had kept it a close secret that I was going there the next day. In no possible way could the Tattletons have known it; but I have thought since they must have remembered my taking a similar journey at the end of November in the previous year.

Feeling that I could neither conceal nor deny my present intention, but with a distinct consciousness of what was coming, I replied coolly, "that I might, perhaps, run up to-morrow."

"Oh, then," said Selina, the youngest girl, clasping her hands in a beseeching kind of way, "would you just do a little commission for us? We should all be so very much obliged. Would you now, Mr. Hawkins, just bring us a wire frame that has been waiting at Messrs. Fixem and Fitem's until some friend would kindly call for it?"

Selina is the best-looking of these young women, and the most moderate in size; her suppliant air partly subdued my rising annoyance, as once again I felt myself victimised; for seldom, if ever, from the time I became acquainted with Mrs. Tattleton and her daughters, had I gone to Conway, our county-town, without being pressed into their service by a commission, and, as I have already intimated, if there is one thing I hate more than another, it is having this sort of thing put upon me. In this instance also there was the additional irritation of feeling that I had been invited to their house for this express purpose, thus fairly walking into the snare laid for me.

Probably I hesitated a little in replying, for a chorus of voices rose around me with assurances that "it was quite light; so easily carried; they would be so much

obliged. Messrs. Fixem and Fitem had been waiting quite a long time to get someone to bring it—someone who would be careful; it is only a friend that one can depend on for this sort of thing. We knew you would not think it a trouble; only, dear Mr. Hawkins"—this from the mother—"you will be sure to take care of it, won't you, now? You see, if it were crushed——" But what would happen in that case I did not hear, for, as Mrs. Tattleton paused at the suggestion, I felt myself compelled to say something.

There was, of course, an implied compliment in thus asking me to do what they insinuated that none but a friend could be trusted with; and four ladies joining in a chorus of request, not to call it entreaty, would bewilder a more self-possessed man than I am. So, like a simpleton, instead of enquiring about this thing that I was to bring with such caution, and finding out what its size and nature might be, I began to utter platitudes about being very happy to do anything for them, begging them not to talk of trouble, and so on, and finally took my leave amidst an avalanche of thanks, which, however, went a very short way in stifling my consciousness of having been outwitted, and once more made a tool of, and that after so positively assuring myself it never should be the case again.

Fixem and Fitem's was a millinery shop, where I had already paid several visits on behalf of the Tattleton family. On this occasion, after having discharged the business which had taken me to town, I once more made my way there, inwardly resolving that next time I was coming to Conway no ingenious device of my neighbours should find it out.

Addressing the peripatetic individual who enquires into the wants of the customers, I said:

"Mrs. Tattleton, of Hazeldene, has requested me to ask for a wire frame that she had ordered."

The man seemed acquainted with the matter, and asked where it should be sent.

"I will take it with me," I replied. "Mrs. Tattleton asked me not to lose sight of it as it required great care."

"Oh, ah!—yes, sir, but I think we had better send it for you, unless," he added suddenly, "perhaps, sir, you have a conveyance waiting?"

"Not at all; can't I take it in my hand?"

The man shook his head.

"Well, send it to The Royal Hotel; I'll be going from that to the Great Southern Station."

"In their 'bus, perhaps, sir?"

"Yes."

"Well, sir, they pass here, and if you would make them pull up, we'll bring it out."

This seemed all right. I went to the hotel for luncheon, and started in the 'bus for the three o'clock train.

It was market-day, and we soon got very crowded, I keeping my seat at the door that I might receive this wire frame, which somehow had shaped itself, to my mind, as being a little thing belonging to fancy-work, as I had seen ladies doing something with coloured wools on small square frames held in one hand.

"Pull up," I said to the conductor as we turned into Moon Street; "pull up at Fixem and Fitem's; they have a small parcel for me."

The man rather growled at pulling up for a parcel, but the wandering shopman appeared at the door the moment we stopped, and I thrust my head out and beckoned to him, telling the conductor at the same time to give the parcel to me, for however annoyed I had been at having this commission forced upon me, I nevertheless intended to take the wire frame home as carefully as if it belonged to me.

We had waited for less than a minute when a porter came out of the shop carrying what looked like something fresh from the guillotine—a headless figure, wrapped in dark drapery. As I looked at it in the man's arms it never occurred to me that I had anything to do with it, until the conductor, seizing it, said to me, "Can't take that inside, sir," and he hoisted it up on the roof.

Another man was following carrying a stand with a pole stuck in it.

"Here you go," said he; it went up after the other, and we moved on.

"My parcel!" I shouted to the man at the door. "Give me my parcel;" whereupon, apparently by his directions, the porter pursued us until he was close enough to call out:

"Mrs. Tattleton, of Hazeldene—that's hers," and I had by no means recovered from my astonishment when we stopped at the station.

The day had changed, and heavy rain was falling. I went to look for a porter, and meeting a man whom I knew, I asked him to come for "my luggage," I called it.

The time was nearly up, and there was a good deal of jostling and confusion among a crowd of market-people.

Davy, my porter friend, came along the platform, grinning as he ran, with the draped headless figure in his arms, and set it down beside me.

"Glad to see the missus is come home, sir," said he; "single gen'l'men has no need for the like o' these"; and he ran back for the stand.

The covering that was over the thing had become partly disarranged, and I saw that my commission consisted of the safe-bringing to Hazeldene of a wire framework the full length of the tall Miss Tattletons without their heads; being also of suitable circumference, and having attached to it an appendix, called, as I afterwards learned, a "crinolette," which consisted of an additional section of wirework to be removed at pleasure.

The whole affair, before I had done with it, enlightened me considerably as to the intricacies of feminine attire.

The bell rang.

"Take your seats!" shouted the guard.

"Put that in!" I called to him, pointing to the draped figure as I ran down the platform.

"Aye, aye," he answered, and in the hurrying crowd I saw Davy coming with the pole, and, jumping into my carriage, we were off, and I began to wonder how I was to get this wretched thing conveyed without bruise or breakage through the changes that awaited it on leaving the train.

Hazeldene Station is above an hour from Conway. I could scarcely get over the ferry by daylight, and the thick rain that was falling would bring darkness sooner. Altogether, I was excessively annoyed. If they had even told me frankly what they wanted me to do, I should have taken it better; but to be led into a job like this in such a sly way! The irritation of it all was well up to boiling-point by the time we drew near Hazeldene Station, and I gathered up my belongings to get out. What was my horror to find we were passing on without stopping! I put my head out of the window, and shouted vainly for the guard, in return for which I got my eyes full of hot ashes, and drew back, angry and smarting, to the solitude of a carriage all to myself.

Blackpool, the next station, would not be reached for forty minutes, and I should have to wait there until the next train came up at seven o'clock. It was already

beginning to get dark, and the rain was falling in one steady, unmitigated down-pour.

"Trains changed to-day, sir," was the guard's reply to my angry address as I got out on the platform at Blackpool. "Mid-day carries mail now, and makes few stoppages." And he hastily passed on, and in another minute, seeing the passengers were out, began to blow his whistle.

"Stop—stop," I cried. "I haven't got all my things."

I had two hampers and some parcels, one of which I was in the act of rescuing from a man who was taking it away instead of his own.

"This yours?" cried the guard, pitching out a hamper.

"Yes, and a wire frame—give me out the frame!" I cried, running alongside the train, which was a long one, and had begun to move.

"Nothing of the kind here!" he shouted from his van-door.

"Yes, there is—there is!" I vociferated.

"Send it up by next train," cried the guard; and they quickened speed, and were off.

The line here runs through a stretch of land reclaimed but lately from the sea, and the intense dreariness of the outlook on that November evening was indescribable. The fading light revealed but one vast swamp, crossed here and there with wide, canal-like ditches full of dark water, while at intervals the uniformity of the flat, wet surface was broken by mounds of black sea-wrack, that, dark and shapeless, added to the gloom around.

The station itself was a long open shed, having a small office at one end, while at the other there was a little waiting-room with a bare floor, a table in the middle, and some wooden chairs round the sides. A fireless grate completed its inhospitable character, and I gladly accepted the station-master's offer of a seat at the stove in his office. Here I learned all the particulars of the changes among the trains, which came into operation on that day.

"The train you came by was late," continued my informant; "they had a good deal to make up when they left this. Denny isn't used to this line?"

"Who's Denny?" I asked.

"The guard; he belongs to the upper line. I don't know how he happens to be down here."

And as he said it I remembered that

the guard at the Conway Station, who told me he would put the wire frame in, was not the same man I had seen here at Blackpool, and now I understood why he did not give it out with the readiness he might have done, as in the long, closely-packed van he did not know where to put his hand on it.

At length, at seven o'clock, the lights of the approaching up-train were seen. There was no one to get in but myself, and as the guard opened a door for me I asked eagerly if he had brought up a wire frame that the last down train took on by mistake.

"All right, sir, I've got it," said he, shutting the door and leaving me to meditate upon how I was to get the thing conveyed from the Hazeldene station to the village of the same name, considering the transit must include, first a long, muddy lane, and then a ferry-boat and a half-hour's walk on the other side. It was now quite dark, with close, heavy rain falling, through which, when we got to the Hazeldene station, their small lamp scarcely showed.

"Got all now, sir?" said the station-master, pushing in my parcels from the edge of the platform; the station did not boast a porter.

"All! No; there's a frame—a wire frame." I was beginning to hate the very name of it.

"It's here, sir, all right," cried the guard, jumping in and whistling; and putting the last button in my waterproof, I advanced to where Evans, the station-master, lantern in hand, was inspecting some crates and other things left by the train, my hampers among them.

"Where's the wire frame?" I asked, not at first seeing it in the dim light.

"Here, sir," said Evans, "and a useful article it is;" and before my indignant gaze he held up a long-shaped wire rat-trap.

"That's not it!" I shouted.

"It's all there is for it, then," said he; "that's what they left out."

"Ferry-boat waiting, sir," said a boy coming up; "father says will you come on it's that wet, the boat's high swamped."

Angry and indignant I stumbled on along the muddy lane, the ferry-boy splashing on before with my parcels; and when we got into the boat, beginning steadily to bale out the rain-pool at the bottom.

By the time we reached the other side I had made up my mind to slip home without letting the Tattletons know I had come, and to go off again early next morning in

search of their abominable frame, for to have them telling everyone I had lost the thing, after all the cautions they gave me, would be worse than even the trouble and vexation it was causing me.

Wet, muddy, and dispirited, I reached the village, and took a back way to my own house, lest Mrs. Tattleton's prying servants might be peeping out and see me.

My housekeeper, a discreet woman, by her look alone expressed the astonishment she felt when I told her to have breakfast for me early the next morning, as I was obliged to go away again, and that I particularly wished her not to let anyone know I had been at home this night.

Never during all the years she had lived with me had the woman seen mystery in my doings until now, and it was in evident alarm that she promised obedience.

The frame must have been left behind at Conway, and I would go and bring it by the first train I could get back in.

But no; on reaching Conway the next morning I was met by protestations from the railway-officials that the wire figure was not there, but had been put into the train I went by on the previous day; the guard was not to be seen, as he had gone away to get married, and had a fortnight's leave of absence; but Davy, the porter, and the other guard who had called out to me that the figure was in the van, adhered to their statements, the porter being equally certain that he put in the stand. Denny, the man who had gone to be married, must have taken the frame on to Southport, where the line ended; they would telegraph there, and have it sent back at once.

Meantime, I went to Fixem and Fitem's, and rated them for not having addressed the thing properly, as, had they done so, the railway-people declared it could not have gone astray. Back to the station to find the telegraph ran, "Nothing of the kind here. Denny gone to Scotland—address not known."

The Conway station-master kept assuring me, "it would turn up; nothing was ever lost on their line; and an article so remarkable in its appearance was the least likely to go astray. He would have a few little handbills struck off, and sent to all the stations along the line; it had evidently been put out at some of them—probably at the junction where two branch lines met, and a number of passengers always changed carriages." Meantime, I returned to the hotel to await the issue.

## CHAPTER II.

THAT afternoon I met, on the steps of the hotel, a cousin whom I had not seen for several years, Harry Sandford. I knew his regiment had returned to England some time back; but I never thought of seeing him in this part of the country, nor did he account for being there in any very lucid or rational manner.

All I could make out was that he was going to attend the hunt ball, which was about to be held in Conway, and he had been spending his morning, along with some of the stewards, superintending the arrangements; a new building lately erected for public purposes being about to be used for the first time.

"You'll be at the ball, of course?" he said.

But I had no such intention, and found rather a difficulty in saying why I was in Conway at all.

"My head-quarters are here at present," said Harry, "till after the ball, at any rate; but I am just off to the country for a day or two. Shall I find you here when I come back?"—a matter on which I could not myself form any opinion, and therefore put him off with an evasive answer.

Not for a trifle would I have let him know what was keeping me there, for, always an insufferable quiz, he seemed at present half bursting with fun and spirits—a very decided contrast to the boredom and worry of my sensations; but then Harry is a great deal younger than I am, and probably never had anything to do with a lady's wire frame.

The handbills were to go out that evening, and if the thing were to be found at all, it would be heard of in a day or two.

The early morning post brought me an invitation to the ball, signed by Vincent Acton, one of the ball-committee and stewards. I felt I must be indebted for this to Harry Sandford, for I knew no one of the name of Acton, though it was not an uncommon one in the county. In fact, circumstances which led me to fix my abode in the remote village of Hazeldene had made me a recluse more than half misanthropical, and I had gradually fallen out of intimacy with former associates, and was probably little remembered by them. The sudden meeting with my cousin Sandford was like an unexpected glimpse into a different existence from mine, out of which all life and fun and go-aheadness had passed away, and which I began to feel was becoming dull and vapid under the determination to avoid all trouble and worry.

On the second morning of my stay at The Royal Hotel, I had just done breakfast, when a waiter came to tell me that "a person wished to see me."

"What kind of person?" I asked.

"Well, sir, I suppose a lady—leastwise, she told me to say so."

"Show her up," I said, thinking it was someone from Fixem and Fitem's, perhaps with news of the frame.

In walked a smart, perky-looking woman of about thirty, well dressed, and energetic-looking. She took the chair I offered her, and beginning to talk rapidly, informed me she had come up from the country to see me regarding a wire-framed figure that she understood I was looking for. I eagerly assented, and she continued:

"I assure you, sir, I never was so sorry for anything as that I had the ill-fortune to have anything to do with it; which if I had known where it came from I'd have gone without rather than use it, Fixem and Fitem's being that vulgar a place that though I don't deny but I served a part of my time there, it's not but I found out what a vulgar place it is, and I left them; and I wouldn't give an order for my ladies there—not at all."

"But have you got the frame?" I began.

"That's what I'm saying, sir, and two rings I've had to cut off at the bottom; it has been Goliath, I think, they took the measure of for it, and the vulgar crinolette they had on it, just twice too big. Selvage and Sample's is the place to get a proper figure, but I just had to make it do—"

"Make it do! but I want it for the owner. How on earth did you get it?"

"Under a mistake, sir, I assure you. Do you think I'd have Fixem's big, clumsy thing? I've had to squeeze it in at the waist, and had to take the bulges out of its sides; my hands," and she pulled one of them out of her muff and looked at it, "they're not the better yet of pulling at it, for my ladies, they are ladies, and neat and small every way, as a lady should be, and Miss Acton, she says to me, 'I must go to Conway and 'pologise for the mistake;' and I just says to her back again, for I can make free with them, they're none of your setting-up upstarts, 'Miss Acton,' says I, 'I think it's the gentleman should 'pologise to us, for him letting that figure loose on the rail coming to us under a mistake.'"

"Where is it now?" I asked in exasperation; "have you brought it?"

"Law, sir, no! and the hunt ball to be next week, and me gettin' leave to order a figure; seeing the way the skirts are now, you can't give them a right set wantin' one. Ladies doesn't like to make figures of themselves, standing till you pin the trimmings on them."

"Will you tell me what you've come here for?" I said, striving to keep my temper.

"Beg your pardon, sir, for interrupting you at your breakfast; it was all along of Miss Acton thinking I ought to explain to you, and I had to come up any way to match my young ladies' trimmings, though, of course, Miss Jessie she's going all in white, being her first ball, and Captain Sandford, he's nigh killed himself laughing about you, sir, losing your figure, and sending out the advertisements. I had to show it to him, and Miss Acton's pink brocade pinned on it, and he said he'd make you tell him all about the lady you were taking it to, and what sort of a size she was."

"Captain Sandford!" I said in astonishment, "what's he got to do with it?"

"Oh, I beg your pardon, sir, but Miss Acton said he was a friend of yours; and of course it's not for me to be talking of family matters—not but the whole country'll soon know it, for he'll be at the ball with them, and a proud man he may be, for where's the like of our Miss Mabel, and plenty of gentlemen dying about her?"

A light broke in upon my brain regarding my Cousin Harry, and with it a foreboding of what it would be to meet him after all this.

Acton—Vincent Acton—was the name that accompanied the ticket sent me for the ball. Harry might have told me about it. Was he engaged to this Miss Mabel, and was it going to see her that put him into such outrageous spirits?

Why should life be so hilarious to him, and so heavy and uninteresting to me?

If the affair of this abominable frame were settled I'd go off to the Sandwich Islands, or any place where there'd be no one to worry me with commissions or bother me with ill-timed fun.

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No. 869. NEW SERIES      SATURDAY, JULY 25, 1885.      PRICE TWOPENCE.

### ONLY A BUSINESS MAN.

By MAY DRYDEN.

#### CHAPTER XXII.

A WEEK had gone by, and it was Saturday evening again.

Netta Heard had gone home that day, a poor little white ghost of her former self, but trying hard to smile, as she thanked Phoebe and Matty for their kindness to her. Matty had shaken her head, and answered in her most severe tone, "Do not thank me, Netta; if anything I could—could do——" And then she had broken off abruptly, and turning sharply on Phoebe, had enquired what she was such a goose as to cry for. Phoebe was not crying, and looked mildly astonished at the accusation, but Matty made a dash at Netta, hugged and kissed her vehemently, and then rushed from the room muttering incoherently something about attending to the bread in the oven. When she reached the kitchen, however, her movements were by no means conducive to the safety of the bread. She opened and shut the oven door violently once or twice, examined an empty bread-bin for at least a minute with apparently intense interest, shook a little pepper from the pepper-pot into the milk-jug, finally carefully washed and wiped a perfectly clean dinner-plate, which she took from the rack for the purpose, and then gave way altogether, and with a choking sob at down by the kitchen-dresser and indulged in the luxury of a good cry.

Matty was still crying bitterly when the front-door bell rang, and was so absorbed in her grief that she did not hear it, and remained unanswered, for Ann was out, and Phoebe was putting Bunyan to bed. The bell did not ring again. The caller went round the house and entered the kitchen

lucky immediate cause of the domestic tempest which had clouded the horizon of the Carfield family.

Dick stood still in amazement and dismay on the threshold of the back-door. Could that be Matty—the indomitable, sharp-tongued, quick-handed Matty, transformed into a very Niobe, her tall, graceful form shaken with sobs, her lovely brown eyes streaming with tears, which she did not even take the trouble to wipe away? He was horror-stricken, and was almost inclined to steal away as he had come, without letting anyone know of his presence. He would have done so, no doubt, but that, as he looked, an uncontrollable desire came over him to try if he could not comfort the weeping girl. He could not bear to go away from the house and leave her grieving so, crying her heart out in solitude. He felt really shocked, too, and could not help thinking that some new calamity had befallen the Carfields, since Matty was in tears. Tears mean so much when shed by those who very rarely give way to them.

So Dick entered the kitchen, making a little clatter as he did so, and causing Matty to look up with a start and an exclamation of astonishment.

"I beg your pardon," said he very humbly, feeling rather frightened now that he had cut off from himself all possibility of retreat.

Matty could be very awe-inspiring when she was angry, and she was very angry now. She might have forgiven Dick for the very small share he had had in the family fracas, but at that moment she felt as though she never could forgive him for having discovered her in the undignified position of weeping bitterly over a damp kitchen-towel. She tried hard to be extra



"May I know the reason of this intrusion, Mr. Saunders?" but she could not keep up the quiet tone of grave remonstrance, and began to cry again, exclaiming between her sobs: "It is too—too bad of you. You, who are not anything to anybody, just when we were getting to be happy, coming and upsetting us all; and, as if you had not done enough, you must needs come and insult me by interfering and meddling, so that I cannot even have a good cry in my own kitchen without being interrupted by your coming to triumph over me."

Matty buried her face in her towel, and cried more pathetically than ever. The fact was, that she was unstrung with the excitement and extra work she had gone through in the past week, and her tears were more than half hysterical; and, moreover, she was excessively annoyed with herself for giving way to them at all.

Dick could not stand it any longer. He came forward and touched her shoulder.

"Miss Matty!"

"Do go away!" sobbed Matty.

"I will in a minute, only please just listen to me first. I don't triumph—really I don't."

"Yes, you do—you know you do."

"No, indeed. I'm miserable; I hate myself!"

"Nonsense!"

But there was a softer tone in Matty's voice, and Dick was emboldened to proceed:

"I am so ashamed of myself I do not know what to do. I came round this evening on purpose to beg pardon. No one answered the bell, so I came to this door to see if I could find anyone here to leave a message with. Do forgive me, Miss Matty."

"I don't know why you should ask me to forgive you," said Matty sternly, sitting up and fumbling for her pocket-handkerchief.

"Perhaps not; but I must be forgiven by someone, you know, and I cannot bother Miss Carfield, and I did speak to Luke."

"Well, what did he say?"

"He looked at me in a sort of vacant way, as though he did not see me, and said, 'Forgive you, my dear fellow! Why, you did not do anything.' You really must forgive me, Miss Matty. You do not know how unhappy I am. I am so wretched that it is a comfort to know that they are so angry with me down at the Holme."

"Are they angry?"

"Yes, very. My cousin Gordon talked to me for ever so long about the necessity of being more thoughtful and less boyish. He was angry—and, mind you, when Gordon does lose his temper he does it thoroughly. Quite right, too. I have not seen him angry before, and I respect him all the more for it. Clarence, even, looks coldly at me when she can remember that I am under punishment, which is not often, bless her!"

Dick finished with a break in his voice which was very boyish indeed, and very touching. Nothing more was needed to enlist Matty's heart—always a very tender one—on his side.

"They are abominably unjust!" said she vehemently.

"Thank you. Then you will forgive me, will you not?"

"Why, yes, of course. But Luke is right; there really is nothing to forgive. I do not think it was your fault a bit. Daniel was sure to make a disturbance some day. Only—oh, dear me!—to think of that poor boy wandering about with no one to take care of him, and no money, and half-heartbroken, too. It is too dreadful!"

Matty's eyes filled with tears again. Dick looked at her with a new interest. He had not supposed her capable of so much feeling. He had, like many other people, judged her to be rather hard.

Matty had only herself to blame for that, since she habitually tried to appear so.

Dick had admired her when he saw her before; now he felt that he liked and respected her.

"I would not fret too much about your brother, if I were you, Miss Matty," said he gently. "I am sure he is really a clever fellow, only he wanted rousing from all his day-dreams. Perhaps this trouble was just what was needed to make a man of him, and he will come home presently so improved you will hardly know him. You all made too much of him at home here. He will learn independence out in the world."

"I never made too much of him," said Matty sadly. "I snubbed him and scolded him. Oh dear! I wish I had been more patient with him. It is so dreadful that he may, perhaps, not come back, and I shall never have a chance to let him see that I really do love him."

"Yes, it is dreadful," said Dick quietly, and was silent for a minute.

Matty liked that. If he had tried to make her feel that she was quite right in her treatment of Daniel she would have despised him.

Presently he went on speaking :

"I do not see, though, Miss Matty, why you should imagine that your brother will not come back. He is much older than I was when I was cast adrift. Do you know that from the time I was six years old until I came to my cousin, I never had a home. I really was nothing to anybody, Miss Matty, even though I lived with my father."

"Oh, don't! I am so sorry. No, I did not know," said Matty earnestly, "or I would never have said such a heartless thing. Indeed I did not mean it; but I was so tired and cross."

"I quite understand. But you will not be despondent any more, will you? Depend upon it your brother will come home again."

"Perhaps," said Matty doubtfully. "But meantime—well, it is just breaking my mother's heart. You know she is never strong, and now she sits all day by the fire and will not speak to anyone. She does not even cry or scold me as she usually does. Only sometimes she goes up into Dan's room and looks at the bed, as though she half thought he were staying in bed to breakfast, as he used to do, you know, sometimes. Then there is poor Netta gone home so white and ill, and something has happened to Phoebe; she always was thoughtful, but now she is very sad too. I see it, though she tries to be cheerful. Luke goes about like an embodiment of the question 'Is life worth living?' and Clarence has not been to see us for a week."

Dick gave a nod of comprehension, and then a half-surprised whistle, as though some new light had suddenly illumined his inner consciousness. He leant up against the doorpost, looking very serious for a minute or two.

Then he turned round and said :

"So that was why you came down here and had a good cry in your own kitchen, was it?"

"You may laugh, if you please," said Matty indignantly. "You would have cried too, if you had been in my place."

"I am sure I should," said Dick, with rather unnecessary earnestness. "I would not laugh for anything; I am far too sorry. Look here—did it occur to you to put those last two things together?"

"Which two?"

"Why, Clarence's absence and Luke's——"

"Why, no. Do you think—— Oh, that would be nice."

"Well, listen. Don't you tell; but I am pretty sure this is it. Those two were just as fond of each other as they could be. Oh, I'd been watching them ever since I came! They were going on just as nicely as possible until last Saturday, and then I verily believe that duffer of a Dan said something to Clarence about Luke; that made her shy, you see, and now she won't have anything to say to him. So he is moping himself to death thinking she does not care for him, and she is fretting her heart out for fear he should have found out that she does care, and should not reciprocate her affection. Oh, it is clear as possible!"

"I shall begin to believe in your being a poet soon!" exclaimed Matty. "How did you find it all out?"

"So you did not believe before?" said Dick, laughing.

"Well," said Matty apologetically, "Peter said so, so I was bound to believe it; but——"

"You did not think I was cut out for one? Well, you were right, Miss Matty. I am not a poet. I have only just got so far as knowing what good poetry is. But will you help to bring our little love-idyll to a successful termination?"

"No, indeed; not I. I am far too clumsy to meddle with such delicate affairs; I should be sure to do harm. You must manage it yourself."

"Well, may I report progress?"

"Yes," said Matty; but then, contradicting herself: "Oh no; why, who would have thought that I should have turned out a matchmaker? No; I will have nothing to do with it."

"Miss Matty, depend upon it," said Dick, "the match is already to all intents and purposes made. I shall only manoeuvre to give them an opportunity of expressing their feelings to each other, and I shall come and report progress. Good-night."

He was gone, and Matty went upstairs to Phoebe in the nursery.

"Phoebe," said she, "I am a conspirator."

"What do you mean, dear?"

"Just that. Do you mind my having a secret from you, Phoebe?"

"Why, no, dear; I suppose you'll tell me some time!"

"Certainly; but for the present I am a conspirator—an arch-conspirator—and I am going to bed to think about my plots. So good-night, Phoebe."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

I ALWAYS thought it a very remarkable thing that a man whom very few of his fellows understood or appreciated in the least, who was spoken of by those who had had business transactions with him as a very shrewd and hard though perfectly honest trader, and by those who had no knowledge of him as unscrupulous and miserly—I always thought it remarkable, I say, that such a man as this should have gained the complete affection, trust, and respect of three women, each so noble in her own way, as Phoebe Carfield, Clarence Fenchurch, and Deborah Leighton.

Yet so it was with Gordon Fenchurch. His sister's love had been his from the time when they were babies together. Phoebe Carfield's love he had sought and won, not in words—the time was not yet quite ripe for that. Had it been, had Gordon spoken his heart's feelings to Phoebe at the end of that long and happy summer, this story had never been written.

As for the third woman who loved Gordon, she loved because she could not help it; because her true-sighted soul saw the beauty and self-sacrifice of the life that was being lived out so near to hers, and yet so far beyond her reach—thrust far beyond her reach by her own act. Had she chosen to desert her own walk in life she might have attained to his, and had her chance with more favoured members of her sex of treading it by his side. Now she was without chance or hope of his companionship, and yet she loved him—would have laid down her life for him. She worshipped him from afar off, and found great comfort in the thought that he did not class her with the rest of his hands as merely a good weaver, but recognised her individuality, discerned her genius, and comprehended and admired her motives for not giving herself up to its claims.

She was of a naturally reticent nature, and very self-dependent, as many fine characters are. Not to her dearest friend would she have given a hint of her love for Gordon, though to herself she did not scruple to admit it fully, feeling no loss of self-respect in so doing. Why should she feel such a loss? It seemed to her the most beautiful and noble sensation of her life. Had she been placed by circum-

stances nearer to him, had there seemed to her to be any chance of her love's achieving the natural termination of woman's love for man, marriage—she might have felt shame in loving one who had no thought of her.

As matters were, Gordon was as far above Deborah as the sun, and she felt as free to admire and love him as she was to admire and love the sunshine.

Just now it happened that she enjoyed a little more of her sunshine than she had done hitherto. She began to see Gordon every Sunday.

This was the manner of its happening.

Dick's errand to Mr. Franks had not been without its fruit. The reverend gentleman called upon the young author at an early date. It came about that when he made his call at about eight o'clock in the evening, Gordon and Clarence were both disengaged, but Dick was busied in one of his wildest fits of writing. He had been at work since six in the morning, had eaten his meals as he wrote, and now when Clarence came to summon him to see his guest, would only growl out, "Presently."

Gordon was at first much annoyed. He had conceived a strong dislike for the whole race of parsons, and hated the notion of being forced to entertain one even for a quarter of an hour.

His natural politeness, however, led him to welcome Mr. Franks with sufficient cordiality to set him at his ease, and presently, to his surprise, he found himself talking to his visitor as though the latter were no parson at all.

Indeed, it was hardly in human nature to resist the genial and sympathetic kind-heartedness that prompted every word which Mr. Franks spoke. He possessed infinite tact—another word for unselfishness—and Gordon never suspected that he was being carefully studied by the kindly, sensible, apparently matter-of-fact man who had called to see his cousin.

When Dick came downstairs at last with pale face, tousled hair, and ink fingers, he found Mr. Franks with a pipe in his mouth, and his feet within the fender, hotly arguing some question of politics with Gordon, bringing his superior learning to bear against the ready judgment and shrewd wit of the Lancashire merchant.

They took hardly any notice of Dick who was, apparently, quite willing to be ignored, and drew a chair near to Clarence where she sat listening eagerly to the war of words.

The conversation drifted on to other

subjects presently. Mr. Franks mentioned some book that was being much talked of—Carlyle's *Reminiscences*.

"I have not read it," said Gordon a little abruptly.

"Have you not?" said Mr. Franks. "I am surprised to hear that. I should have supposed that Carlyle would have been one of your heroes."

"I know nothing about him. I know very little about books at all, Mr. Franks. You will soon discover that I am nothing but an ill-educated, or rather uneducated business-man."

"Ah, well, but you should read Carlyle, you know, all the same, and if you will allow me to say so, other books too. I cannot see any reason why a business-man should not keep himself up in the current literature of the day, however impossible it may be for him to enter upon any deeper study. I am a great believer in the wholesome influence of books."

"So was not my father," remarked Dick.

"How came you to be literary then?" asked Gordon.

"Natural perversity, I presume," said Dick coolly. "Sheer love of opposition, I should not wonder. Goodness knows, I met with enough of it."

"What was your father?" asked Mr. Franks.

"He was in the City—a stockbroker. I was with him for some time, but a certain little incident occurred which made it absolutely necessary for me to leave him."

"What was that?"

"Well, you see, I was always fond of books, and though I was taken from school very young, as was necessary if I was to do any good in business, I still indulged my old liking by buying a book whenever I could screw money enough out of my allowance. Old classics were my especial hobby, and one day, when I was about fifteen, I brought home a dear little *Elzevir*, to get the money for which I had gone without pudding for a month. I gave it a place of honour on my book-shelf, and spent the whole evening in worshipping and arranging my favourites. I suppose my absence excited my father's curiosity, for when I came home from the office next day I found neither shelf nor books. My father had sold them. Upon my word, I believe I felt, for a time, as badly as a mother would who had lost her child. I sat down and cried like a great baby, and my father came in and told me that I was a fool for my

pains, and that he would have me study no books save my account-book. So I took my life into my own hands then. I felt as though I should become quite wicked if I went to the office again—almost bad enough to put my account-book in the fire, and I believe that would have been as bad as murder in my father's eyes."

"You poor boy!" exclaimed Clarence impetuously.

"Poor father, rather, Clarence," said Dick gently and rather sadly. "It was a grievous disappointment to him. I was his only son, you know."

"Could you not help it?" asked Mr. Franks.

"No, sir; I could not help it," said Dick, and the older man accepted his answer for truth, and let the question pass.

When Mr. Franks rose to go, and Gordon had seen him off the premises, he turned back and said to Dick:

"Can you take a pew for me in that man's chapel?"

"Yes, surely," answered Dick. "But will you not wait a little? You are so impulsive, Gordon."

"Now or never is your time, lad. Do not be a humbug, Dick; you know it is just what you wish me to do."

"I do not deny it, old fellow," said Dick. "So hand over the money and I'll go to-morrow and pay the first quarter in advance. That will ensure your going to chapel; you'll want to feel that you have your money's worth."

So the matter was settled, and on the following Sunday Gordon took possession of a pew in the old square chapel on the green. It was a corner pew, red-cushioned, and not too comfortable; but on all those bright summer Sundays that followed, as Gordon and Clarence sat in it, they could see, through the open chapel-door, full-foliaged lime-trees waving coolly, with a gentle rustle of green. Other lime-trees brushed softly against the dusty window above their heads, and let the sunlight through in patches. They grew to love the place, old and shabby as it was, and found no fault with the music, though it was poor; nor with the order of service, though at first it struck them as somewhat bald and cold. They read over and over again, until they knew them by heart, the quaint inscriptions on the old mural tablets, and wondered what manner of a life had been led by the old lady who was granddaughter to an Earl and yet had remained a spinster all her life, and whether the lady who was

described as "An obedient daughter, a loving mother, a tender sister, and a true wife," was really very much liked in her earthly relations. There was a prevailing atmosphere of peace in the little chapel, and Gordon found there more rest for his wearied mind and spirit than he had ever enjoyed before. Nor was his pleasure lessened by the fact that he received from Mr. Franks abundant and wholesome food for an intellect which had too long been educated on one line only.

### THE TERRORS OF SCHOOL.

THE death of a King's College boy a little while ago once more drew attention to the practice of bullying in public schools; and the measures which are being taken by the Public Prosecutor will no doubt make school-life pleasanter. From time immemorial some form of brutality has been practised upon new comers in public schools, or upon the weak by the strong. "Ah, happy years! Once more who would not be a boy!" exclaimed Byron. The answer depends entirely upon the character of the school one was forced to attend, upon the whim of the master, and the disposition of one's schoolfellows. Our impression is that few would care to go through their schoolboy troubles again, and to be in constant terror of the bigger boys.

Things are bad enough now, but they were worse at the beginning of the century. Does any man, be he old or young, ever forget the treatment to which he was subjected at school? The rich and the strong were always respected. How fared it with the poor and the feeble?

Serjeant Ballantine was subjected to tyranny because he was badly dressed and had no pocket-money; and there was a fat brute, named Thomson, who used to thrash him unmercifully; but, one afternoon, the Serjeant says, "I hurt his head with a leaden inkstand, and, although I got well caned for this little accident, I found it had a good effect upon my persecutors." Others have had the same experience. When Carlyle was sent to school his mother piously enjoined on him that he should, under no conceivable circumstances, fight with any boy, nor resist any evil done him, and her instructions were so solemn that for a long time he was accustomed to submit to every kind of injustice simply for her sake. It was a sad mistake, he says. When it was

practically discovered that he would not defend himself, every kind of indignity was put upon him, and his life made utterly miserable. Fortunately, the strain was too great. "One day," he says, "a big boy was annoying me, when it occurred to my mind that existence under such conditions was not supportable, so I slipped off my wooden clog, and there-with suddenly gave that boy a blow which sent him sprawling on face and stomach in a convenient mass of mud and water. I shall never forget the burthen that rolled off me at that moment. I never had a more heartfelt satisfaction than in witnessing the consternation of that contemporary. It proved to me a measure of peace also; from that time I was troubled by the boys no more."

The little boy has certainly a sorry time of it at school; but, as he is generally the possessor of more brain-power than the big boy, he is enabled to secure protection at times. When Wilkie Collins was at school he secured the protection of a big boy by telling him stories. Protection cannot always be secured, either by doing a big lad's sums, or telling stories; and there are certainly not many boys who could tell a story like Wilkie Collins. Cowper suffered much from the cruelty of boys older and stronger than himself, who took a malicious delight in tyrannising over him; and such was the effect of the savage treatment upon his gentle spirit that, speaking of a lad of about fifteen years of age, who acted towards him with peculiar barbarity, he says: "I well remember being afraid to lift my eye upon him higher than his knees, and I knew him better by his shoe-buckles than by any other part of his dress. May the Lord pardon him, and may we meet in glory!"

But the most amusing account of the desire to tease and tyrannise over a new comer at school is furnished by the late William Howitt. He was educated at Ackworth School, a well-known elementary school of the Friends, and situated near Pontefract, in Yorkshire. His first trial here is thus described: "There was a lad called Billy Bull—a long, thin lad, with a smooth, impudent face, and remarkably white hair. He soon discovered that I was very shy; for, bold and affable as I had always felt myself in my own circle, here all was so strange to me that I for some time felt solitary, and even bashful; and it was his delight to come and stare silently in my face. Whenever he spied me alone, he

was sure to come running, and look steadfastly in my face without a word, without a smile. Turn whichever way I would, he turned too; go where I would, he followed; now he kept on this side, now on that; now looked over my shoulder, and now came again directly in front. This he kept up for some weeks, and I was ashamed of complaining or asking anybody to take my part. Sometimes he would encounter me in a narrow passage, and, spite of all my remonstrances and endeavours to pass him, there he kept the way with his imperturbable and eternal stare. If I went to the boys' garden, Billy Bull started up from behind a bush; if I retired to a solitary corner, he found me; if I walked in the most public place it was only the better to be seen by him. The persecution had become intolerable to me, and yet I blushed at the very idea of complaining to anyone that Billy Bull looked into my face. If I told any of the boys, I expected they would laugh at me; if I told a master, I expected all the school would laugh at me. But to me it was no laughing matter, and when I saw Billy Bull coming I have often burst into tears of vexation, which seemed to produce no other change in his system of tormenting than an evident satisfaction in his large grey eyes. But at length the day of deliverance came—the torment reached its acme—the spirit that never was quite asleep in me started up in active indignation, and as Billy Bull was one day gazing in my face, with his nose not many inches from mine, I raised my hand, and gave him such a thwack on the cheek as made the tears start into his eyes, and his face became one piece of crimson in ludicrous contrast with his snow-white hair. He made no attempt at retaliation. I left him to his reflections; and from that day forward Billy Bull left me to mine. This incident passed, I found myself very comfortable." Howitt took the only means possible to ensure his own comfort at school, and we think every other boy would be justified in using the same means under the same circumstances.

Another illustration of the necessity of a boy's defending himself occurs in Alexander Somerville's autobiography. On account of his shabby dress and the frequency with which the schoolmaster thrashed him, the other boys believed him to be a great, stubborn lad, who had no feeling in him. One day, however, he undeceived them. They carried their perse-

cution too far. Not satisfied with calling him the "ragged radical," they tore his clothes. "The hat I raised from where it had sunk over my face," he remarks, "and saw part of the brim in the hands of a lad who was a kind of king of the school, or cock of the walk, with some of my mother's threads hanging from it. He was older than I, and a fighter. I had never fought, nor had I heard of two human creatures going together to fight until I came to that school. Yet neither had I heard of the Divine principle of forbearance and forgiveness as regards blows upon the body, and the laceration of feelings worse than blows upon the body; my father, who gave me many good precepts, probably never having contemplated the possibility of my being a fighting boy. But I was a strong boy for my age, and I had received very bad treatment. My honour and the remembrance of my affectionate mother's toils made me feel like a giant. I amazed the king of the school by giving him a blow in the face that laid him flat on his back, and amazed the onlookers by giving several of them as much with the same results. Not that I escaped without blows myself; I got many, but they were returned with principal and interest." For thus defending himself he was thrashed by the schoolmaster most severely. "He at once ordered me to hold up my right hand, which I did, and received a violent cut on the edge of it, given with his whole strength. He ordered my left hand up, and up it went, and received a cut of the same kind, then my right, next my left, and so on he went until I had got six cuts on each hand. He had a way of raising himself upon his toes when he swung the heavy taws round his head, and came down upon his feet with a spring, giving the cuts slantingly on the hand."

Happily the use of the taws is now a thing of the past. With the stocks for drunken men, and the branks for scolding women, the taws has been consigned to the curiosity shop as one of the relics of the dark ages. But the tyranny exercised by boys continues, and seems likely to continue, for boys are generally very pugnacious. Professor Colvin tells us that Landor was pugnacious at school, but only against the strong. "You remember," he writes, in some verses addressed some seventy years later to an old school-companion:

"You remember that I fought  
Never with any but an older lad,  
And never lost but two fights in thirteen."

As a rule, however, the strong tyrannies over the weak, and thus make their school-life miserable. The question arises, What can be done to remedy the evil and to make school-life more enjoyable? It has been suggested that if boys' duty towards their weaker brethren, and the law of kindness generally, were more frequently enforced, it might be just as well as cramming so much learning into their heads.

Again, it is quite possible that if the masters ruled by kindness instead of brute force, their scholars would show more humanity outside the school-doors. Too often, even in our days, teachers resemble Hood's Irish schoolmaster, who kept his children

Sitting like timid hares, all trembling on their forms.

Schoolmasters have always had a reputation for severity, and have excelled in the use of the cane. In fact, flogging seems to have formed a part of the system of training in force at public schools. The great Reformer, Erasmus, remarks Arch-deacon Farrar, has left us a painfully graphic account of how he saw a poor boy at St. Paul's cruelly beaten by a grave and reverend divine, for no fault whatever, but merely to show him the discipline of English boys. And so for centuries the bad custom of cruel education continued. It was for the purpose of securing milder treatment of children at school that Roger Ascham wrote his celebrated work on The Schoolmaster, but it does not seem to have effected any reform, for beating was thought the best way of reducing a boy into proper form or shape. At the end of the eighteenth century, Southey was expelled Westminster School because he had boldly denounced the system of flogging, contending that it proceeded from the devil. Even more brutality was exhibited at St. Paul's School during the present century. Serjeant Ballantine was a day-scholar at this institution; and he has written a graphic account of his masters, who were all tyrants—cruel, cold-blooded, unsympathetic tyrants. "Armed with a cane," he says, "and surrounded by a halo of terror, they sat at their respective desks. Under Durham, the smaller boys trembled; Edwards took the next in age. Each flogged continuously. The former, a somewhat obese personage, with a face as if cut out of a suet-pudding, was solemn in the performance of this his favourite occupation. The Rev. Mr. Edwards, on the con-

trary, though a cadaverous-looking object, was quite funny over the tortures he inflicted. . . . One of the favourite modes of inflicting pain adopted by these tyrants was, when the boys came in on a winter's morning, shivering and gloveless, to strike them violently with the cane over the tips of their fingers. I nearly learnt at that school the passion of hatred, and should probably have done so but that my mind was too fully occupied by terror. Bean was a short, podgy, pompous man, with insignificant features. His mode of correction was different in form, and I can see him now, with flushed, angry face, lashing some little culprit over back and shoulders until his own arm gave way under the exertion. Amongst the amusements of this gentleman, one was to throw a book—generally Entick's Dictionary, if I remember rightly—at the head of any boy who indulged in a yawn, and if he succeeded in his aim, and produced a reasonable contusion, he was in good humour for the rest of the day. I have met them all three since my school-days, and found them shallow and ignorant, no doubt with plenty of Greek and Latin in their heads, but without knowledge of human nature, or power of appreciating the different dispositions of their pupils."

The treatment was no better at Winchester. Anthony Trollope felt convinced that he was flogged oftener than any other human being alive. "It was just possible," he says, "to obtain five scourgings at Winchester, and I have often boasted that I obtained them all." The worst of Anthony Trollope's foes at school was his brother, about whom he writes: "In accordance with the practice of the college, which submits, or did then submit, much of the tuition of the younger boys to the elder, he was my tutor; and in his capacity of teacher and ruler, he had studied the theories of Draco. I remember well how he used to exact obedience after the manner of that lawgiver. Hang a little boy for stealing apples, he used to say, and other little boys will not steal apples. The doctrine was already exploded elsewhere, but he stuck to it with conservative energy. The result was that, as a part of his daily exercise, he thrashed me with a big stick."

The treatment of boys at the common schools of Scotland was, in the early part of the century, extremely barbarous. In his Autobiography of a Working Man, Alexander Somerville, "one who has whistled at the plough," gives a graphic



description of his dominie. The school-master was lame, and he became a teacher only for that reason; but, excepting the inordinate and cruel use of the taws for punishment, his system of teaching was considered better than that of any of the parish-schools at that time. What were the taws? Questioned as to why he was late one morning, Somerville remarks, "After some hesitation I, in my ignorance, gave him an answer which offended him; upon which he took his great leathern strap, thirty inches long, two and a half inches broad, and split half-way up into six thongs, the end of each having been burned in the fire to make it hard, the other end of the belt having a slit in it, into which he put his hand and wound it round his wrist. With this instrument, called the taws, he thrashed me on the hands, head, face, neck, shoulders, back, eyes—everywhere, until I was blistered. He wanted me to cry, but I would not, and never did for pain or punishment then or since, though my flesh is nervous and extremely sensitive."

Clergymen exhibited as much inhumanity as laymen. From the Life of Dr. Brock, who was for more than twenty years the most popular Baptist minister in London, we get another glimpse of the cruelty inflicted upon boys. When a little boy, he was placed at school under the care of a clergyman who was, to say the least, a brute. "There was literally no teaching. If I got through a sentence or two in translation without any monstrous mistakes, I was not punished; if I did mistake, there was no mercy. Sometimes it was, 'Strip, sir, that you may be birched.' At other times it was, 'Go, kneel in the middle of the room, and hold this book out at arm's-length.' At other times it was a fierce seizure of both my ears, or a savage grip at my throat, with as much shaking or dragging up and down the room as the prevailing burst of inhumanity inspired."

This picture of school tyranny in the early part of this century represents the brutal mode of punishment adopted several years later in private grammar-schools, as many men who have now reached middle age can testify.

So general was corporal punishment, that when Buckle was sent to school, his parents gave instructions that he was to learn nothing unless he chose, and should on no account be whipped. He did not choose, and his biographer tells us that he learnt nothing beyond "what fell into his

head;" but he became so interested in geometrical and algebraical demonstrations on the blackboard that he returned home with a first prize for mathematics. "So unexpected a distinction pleased his father so much that he asked him what he would like best as a reward—"To be taken away from school," was Buckle's reply; and his parents granted his request."

### THE PARIS CLAQUE.

Few dictionaries supply us with all that is wanted to be known of the words actually current in a modern language. John Bellows's wonderful Bonâ-fide French and English Pocket Dictionary gives "Claque, substantive masculine, an operahat; claque, substantive feminine, a slap, also a clog." Stone's Dictionary brings us nearer to what we are in search of by "Claqueur, a noisy clapper or applauder." Encyclopædic Littre alone interprets "Claque, secondly, a troop of claqueurs in a theatre, 'The claque in vain endeavoured to maintain the new piece.'"

Here, then, at last, we have a clear definition of a singular fraternity, whose course of action is based on the belief that men and women are sheep, in more senses than one; that they are often very silly; that they go astray hardly knowing why, unless it be through the mere love of straying; that they frequently submit quietly to be shorn—hence the saying about a fool and his money—and, above all, that they are easily induced to follow a leader.

It is on this principle of preferring to be led, rather than to take the trouble of leading themselves, that many people pin their faith and their views of things in general on some particular journal or review, carefully abstaining from reading any other, or at least any other advocating opposite opinions.

To avoid this helpless and narrow-minded system, a French friend (who is supposed to have no political bias, or perhaps finds it prudent to keep that bias to himself), while discussing the matter in question, lately told me that, not to be even suspected of following any partisan editor's lead, when he went to his club, he made a point of reading, one after the other, the Pays (Bonapartist), the Soleil (Orleanist), the Intransigeant (Destructivist), and the Figaro (as you like to call it). Nobody, therefore, could accuse him

of undue partiality; and the mixture of newspapers of different shades, like the blending of all the colours of the rainbow, produced in him the absence of colour, white, independence—that is, left his mind in a state of “carte blanche.”

In French matters theatrical the case is different. An audience, in the mass, is led not so much by newspaper criticism, written and printed after the representation is over, but by critics present in the flesh and blood, enthusiastically applauding during the performance, and strenuously urging others to applaud. The persons composing this band of approbationists (the palms of whose hands must have become hard, thick, and tough as rhinoceros leather from continued exercise in professional clapping), are an established institution, known as the *Claque*, otherwise “entrepreneurs de succès” (ensurers of success).

A good deal that is curious respecting these individuals is already known from tradition, rumour, and observation; but more has lately been revealed in the *Mémoires d'un Chef de Claque*,\* who has given us the benefit of his experience, coolly treating the whole of his proceedings as a question of tactics and a matter of business. M. Jules Lan is a man of genius. It was he who invented the pocket-handkerchief proof of a performer's pathos, which none but the most hardened of men and women could resist. He shall relate this master-stroke himself:

“At the time when the melodramas of Guilbert de Pixérécourt and others were flourishing, and lachrymose pieces were all the fashion, an original idea occurred to me—namely, to supply my men with pocket-handkerchiefs”—had they none of those useful articles before?—“requesting them to pull them out, wipe their eyes, and blow their noses while the most touching scenes of the play were going on. The effect was irresistible, and never failed; the whole house—especially the ladies—began to weep and wipe their eyes. One evening, a wag in the pit opened his umbrella to escape a wetting from the showers of tears.”

The *claque* pleads in favour of its existence that it is an absolutely necessary institution. It spurs and stimulates the actors, wakes up an inattentive public, and italicises the choice passages of a dramatic work. Parisian actors are fond of a little

applause at their first entry on the stage in any part, and almost exact its being given. Who is to be depended upon to supply it with certainty, except the *claque*? Moreover, as an excuse for the practice, every distinguished personage, at present, expects applause, from the cheers given to the successful orator in the House of Commons to the demonstrations of welcome bestowed on popular royalty.

Far from feeling any shame at its proceedings, the *claque* boasts that it is almost as old as the theatre itself. Whenever the Emperor Nero performed, he took measures to secure liberal applause from the audience. Burrhus and Seneca, stationed on each side of the stage, signalled the spectators to give marks of their approval. In fact, they were veritable “chefs de *claque*.”

Nero's ministers taught his subjects their duty by shouting “*Plaudite, cives!*”—“Citizens, applaud!”—a formula which became traditional at Rome, and was employed on other besides dramatic occasions. Hence the name of “*Romaina*,” given to *claqueurs*, or professional applauders, who are also called “*les chevaliers du lustre*,” because they had adopted the habit of placing themselves in the middle of the pit, immediately under the chandelier, as visitors to the burnt-down Paris Opera may have experienced to their great annoyance.

*Claqueurs* are commanded by a chief and a sub-chief, the former being chosen by the manager of the theatre. On grand occasions, there are chiefs of detachments posted in different parts of the pit, with the skill of practised theatrical strategy. Consequently, these *claqueurs* not unfrequently do battle with hostile caballers who dare to hiss. Nor are they always without excuse for so doing. Violence and injustice are apt to call forth violence to resist them. A new piece may be hissed and hooted down by an adverse clique through other motives than fair and honest criticism.

Not to dwell on the party contests between the Gluckists and the Piccinists of the last century, and the classicists and the romanticists of the present, I may mention Edmond About's *Gaëtana*, which was crushed in 1862 by a concerted muster of his personal enemies. Three years afterwards, the two De Goncourts, Henriette Maréchal suffered the same fate, under the unexpected attacks of an upstart “*chef de cabale*,” nicknamed *Pipe-en-bois*. Still more recently, at the *Théâtre Français*, Erckmann-Chatrian's charming comedy,

\* *Mémoires d'un Chef de Claque, Souvenirs des Théâtres, Recueillis par Jules Lan.* Paris, Librairie Nouvelle, 13, Boulevard des Italiens.

L'Ami Fritz, narrowly escaped premature extinction on equally unavowable grounds of hostility, by political rather than literary adversaries. The contests for supremacy between rival actors and actresses, sustained by their respective partisans, afford materials for a longer history of theatrical struggles and skirmishes than can be related here. In all these the claque has played, on one side or the other, an influential and important part.

Grave politicians have not disdained to undertake the office of *chef de claque*. When Rachel first appeared at the *Comédie Française*, she was favoured with the intimate friendship and constant advice of Adolphe Crémieux—like her, an Israelite—who rose to be Minister of Justice, member of two provisional governments, and was a senator when he died in 1880.

Whenever Rachel attempted a new part for the first time, she obtained for Crémieux a certain number of pit-tickets at reduced prices. Crémieux disposed of those tickets amongst friends and acquaintances, who were delighted to witness a first performance by Rachel without being obliged to "faire queue" at the door—one of the small miseries of French life.

By special favour granted to the famous tragedian, her family and friends, conducted by Crémieux, went into the theatre by a private entrance before the doors were opened to the public. Crémieux selected two or three benches, on which he seated his favoured friends, placing himself in the middle of the group. After his death, not one of the laudatory tributes to his memory mentioned that he had officiated as *chef de claque*. Vacher, the official *chef* at the *Théâtre Français*, observed every movement of his distinguished rival, knowing how much more capable than himself Crémieux was to italicise the points made by his (Crémieux's) co-religionist and pupil.

The greatest actors are not insensible to the claque's approval and patronage—sometimes even to its advice. Rachel owed her immense success to her resolution, from her very first appearances, to strive by every possible means to attain the artist's ideal—perfection. She knew that her illustrious predecessors, Lekain and Talma, following the traditional example of Roscius, had pursued that system, in order to act tragedy worthily. Talma, in fact, after creating, as it is called, a part, on retiring to his dressing-room, although loaded with garlands and applause, shut himself in, and once more carefully read

the piece which had just been acted. With a pencil he marked the passages in his part where he fancied that his diction or his gestures were still capable of improvement. Rachel, following the advice of Crémieux and a few other friends, did the same, with even greater success than had been expected.

One day, Crémieux offered M. Lan a place in the theatre to see Rachel come out in *Bajazet*—a civility which was gladly accepted at once. The tragedy over, after Rachel had been five times recalled to receive an avalanche of crowns and bouquets, old Félix, her father, came and thanked Crémieux and his friends for the ovation bestowed upon his daughter. Then, assuming parental modesty, he added, "But did you not remark, when Roxane says to Bajazet, '*Sortez!*' ('Leave me!'), that Rachel missed the right effect?"

They mounted, accordingly, to Rachel's room, to give her what her parent called "*une remontrance*," meaning a few observations, perhaps a scolding, for the old man could not conceal his excitement, which he explained, or excused, in German-Jew phrase: "*Venever I see my daughter blay a new bart, it gives me gross balbitations of te heart.*" He ought to have said "*balbitations of te booklet.*"

Crémieux desired nothing better than to go and compliment the "*grande actrice.*" But he begged M. Félix to allow M. Lan to accompany them, after stating who and what he was—namely, *chef de claque*.

Rachel, still in sultana's costume, surrounded by her young brothers and sisters and a few intimate friends, received her visitors in the *sanctum sanctorum*, which none but the privileged were allowed to enter. She listened attentively to her father's reproaches, as well as to M. Crémieux's more courteous criticism.

"And you, M. Lan," she said to him, evidently curious to hear what he would say; "what is your opinion of my '*Sortez!*'?"

"*Mademoiselle,*" he replied, "brilliant stars, like you, have no need of light; they eclipse all inferior luminaries. Nevertheless, permit me to cite an example. Talma, in *Manlius*, when convinced of his friend Servilius's treachery, says to him, '*Qu'en dis-tu!*' ('How do you answer this?'). Servilius replies, '*Il est vrai! j'ai conçu ce funeste dessein.*'—that is, avows his guilt. Talma, whose countenance expressed indignation and scorn, seized the handle of his dagger, and drew it half

out of its sheath, as if about to strike. The effect required by the situation was produced. Now, if you were to make the same gesture with the dagger fastened to your girdle, when you say to Bajazet, 'Sortez!' you would better indicate the fate which awaits the young prince at the palace-gate."

"Thanks—a thousand thanks, monsieur!" exclaimed Rachel. "You have found for me what I sought for in vain while I was studying my part."

And Rachel followed the chef de claque's counsel, thereby increasing the impressiveness and terror of the situation.

This anecdote—M. Lan modestly adds, although modesty is not his leading characteristic—shows the general public what long, profound, and conscientious study great artists devote to what is called "composer un rôle"—creating a part.

Amongst other distinguished theatrical acquaintances, M. Lan had the good fortune to include Mdlla. Mars. One day, unable to give him two stalls which he required, she sent him to Mdlla. Duchesnois, who passed him on, with a short note of introduction, to Talma. The great actor, although ill in bed with the malady, hypertrophy of the heart, which brought him to his grave, nevertheless received the chef de claque.

"Did you see me play my latest part in *La Démence de Charles Six*?" he asked.

"Certainly, I did. You were magnificent, and my hands are still blistered with applauding."

"What a pity," continued Talma, "that I should be taken ill, just when I was about to play in *La Mort du Tasse*! What a capital part I should have had!"

So saying, he sat up in the bed and declaimed the part of Tasso, exactly as if he had been on the stage, with the chef de claque for his sole critic and auditor.

M. Lan's Memoirs contain anecdotes of other persons besides claqueurs. As everything relating to theatres is full of interest for the outside public, the author, consequently, is not over-particular respecting the stories which he contrives to catch in the sweep of his net, theatrical lawsuits, which at the time filled the courts to overflowing, supplying a liberal contribution. At the trial of the thieves, her servants, who stole Mdlla. Mars's diamonds from her dressing-room while she was acting on the stage, great curiosity was manifested to see the actress off the boards, and to hear her speak in her everyday voice. The doors of the

assize-court were besieged; on two successive days the crowd waited for admission two by two in a line, exactly as when some unusually attractive performance is announced at one of the great theatres.

The same thing happened when Victor Hugo pleaded in person before the Tribunal of Commerce, to urge his rights in a question of literary property. Every corner was packed to suffocation. Nor was his audience disappointed. He was eloquent, persuasive, logical—a wonder for him—and gained his suit without the help of an advocate. A like success was not achieved by Balzac, who, powerful with his pen, was feeble with his tongue. In this respect he resembled our own Goldsmith, "who wrote like an angel, but talked like poor Poll."

At the aforesaid trial, M. Lan had the honour of given his arm to Mdlla. Mars on their way to the Palais de Justice, where Berryer received them with the compliment, "Thalia is come to pay a visit to Thémis, who receives her with a hearty welcome." When the President, according to the established formula, enquired her name, profession, domicile, and age, she answered in her clear, melodious voice, "Hippolyte Mars, sociétaire of the Comédie Française, residing in Paris, Rue de la Tour-des-Dames," but as to her age, she spoke so low that the clerk of the court could not catch her words. The President had the good taste not to repeat the question.

Apropos to actresses' ages, M. Lan remembers that Mdlla. X., who still played ingénues at the Asterisk Theatre, one day married her daughter, and he was invited to the wedding as one of the witnesses. The bride's mother, on being required to state her age, stammered, blushed, and said at last, "I don't quite remember."

"Very good," said the mayor to his secretary; "put down thirty-six."

Mdlla. X. responded with a gracious bow to the magistrate's municipal gallantry.

A very great deal might be related about the subordinate members of the theatrical profession. Gossip respecting or disrespecting the ladies shall be refrained from; the gentlemen can well take care of themselves.

Supernumeraries, "comparses," existed in the time of the Romans. Their French name is perhaps derived from "comparer," to appear. They are recruited and commanded by chiefs who receive ten sous a night more than their men; besides which magnificent pay they enjoy the privilege of inflicting fines. It is evident that these

poor wretches, who earn from fifteen to twenty sous a night, have not the means of supplying themselves with evening dress when they figure as fashionable guests at a ball, a wedding, or a soiree. Parsimonious administrations rig them out by making an arrangement with an old clothes shop.

Notwithstanding this indignity the male supernumeraries in a theatre consider themselves to be somebody in no way inferior to the leading actors. One day, when Lekain, the famous tragedian of the Théâtre Français, had his shoes blacked in the street, the shoeblack refused the offered payment. "No, no," he said; "colleagues don't take money from each other. We are comrades. You play the kings; I play the Greek and Roman soldiers."

To figure on the stage, even in this humble way, is sometimes a monomania. At the Variétés there was a chorus-singer with an income of a thousand pounds a year. After the first performance of a piece he treated the other chorus-singers to punch at the café of the theatre, telling them, "We have done our utmost to ensure success. It is the manager and the authors who ought to treat us, but, as you know, they are a set of skinflints."

French supers are not to be trifled with. In a tragedy given at the Odéon, Eric-Bernard, who played Artaxerxes, killed himself at the dénouement. The stage-manager had given the supernumeraries orders to catch Artaxerxes, mortally wounded, in their arms, and carry him off the stage. The first night, out of clumsiness or mischievous fun, they let poor Eric-Bernard fall on the boards. He hurt himself, and abused them roundly as a "set of canailles! Auvergnats! useless animals!" and the rest. Then, complaining to their chief, he got every one of them fined.

The following evening, the moment Artaxerxes had stabbed himself, they rushed at him furiously and hauled him more roughly than was agreeable. "The scamps!" he grumbled as soon as he was in the wing; "yesterday they let me break my bones, and to-night they have pinched me black and blue."

Supers are very particular about the distribution of parts. In a fairy piece a set of dominos was represented by men wearing on their backs boards marked with the different numbers. A discontented super gave in his resignation, and told the management they must find a substitute.

"Whv. what's the matter?" asked the

astonished directeur; "don't you get your fifteen sous a night like the others?"

"It isn't about the sous at all. I am one of the oldest artists belonging to the theatre, and they ought to have made me the double six; instead of that I am the lowest number—the double blank. Rather than submit to such injustice I prefer to leave the theatre."

With difficulty an exchange was effected with another less punctilious super.

Another complained of being put into the hind legs of an elephant, whilst his comrade, a junior member of the corps, occupied the front. He revenged himself by kicking the forelegs' heels every time that their march commenced.

At the time when military pieces were played at the now demolished theatre of the Cirque, double pay had to be given to supers who consented to wear Austrian, Russian, or Prussian uniforms. A French soldier only got fifteen sous and the glory. What most humiliated a super was, not to be killed in battle, but to be taken prisoner.

At a general rehearsal, a Prussian was told how he ought to deliver up his sword to a Frenchman. "Never!" shouted the super. "Kill me, if you like; but, as to giving up my sword, none of that, if you please! I throw up my engagement."

A compromise was made with this hero. He changed his costume, put on a French uniform, and received fifteen sous less; but his honour was saved.

## CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

### CORNWALL.

NOTWITHSTANDING bright sun and clear, translucent seas, an air of mystery and gloom seems to hang about the coasts of Cornwall. A savage, rock-bound coast is backed by hills that are bleak and barren, without beauty or grandeur; and the little towns that lie among the hollows in the rugged landscape are distinguished by the melancholy bareness that is characteristic of the dwelling-places of the Celtic race. Dispossessed and driven to the bleak corner of the pleasant land that was once ours, of what use to make the desert blossom around us, or disguise the melancholy facts of life by pleasant surroundings? Such is the unspoken lament that is suggested by the aspect of the native settlements in Wales or Cornwall. Among the rugged hills and wild, bleak moorlands, the rude buildings of some deserted mine have the

same pathetic suggestiveness as the broken circle of huge stones, or the hoary cromlech uplifted against the sky.

Long ago the desert, solitary land was thinly peopled by anchorites and monks, and the missionaries—pure and visionary—of the early Celtic Church established their settlements here and there on rock or promontory, or on some barren islet among the waves.

They had their lodges in the wilderness,  
Or built their cells beside the shadowy sea.

But along with the colonies of the cenobites there existed a still more ancient population, the metal-workers, who from unknown antiquity had worked the tin-mines along the coast. Even in dim pre-historic ages—as far back, perhaps, as the pre-glacial period, when England, as yet unsevered from the Continent of Europe, enjoyed an almost tropical climate, and the mammoth and the elephant roamed through the primeval forests, even then there is evidence that there were men at work, washing the ore from the surface lodes, and fusing the material for those weapons of bronze that made a distinct epoch in the history of humanity. And while the rest of Britain was still a country unknown to the great civilised communities on the Mediterranean shores, the rugged promontory of Cornwall and the islands to the westward were frequented by the galleys of the Phœnicians. Merchants from Tyre and Sidon, and, later, from proud Carthage, sought the sheltered bays and coasts, and bartered the rich wares of the East for the precious tin which nowhere else could be had, unless in the less rich and accessible mines of the Spanish peninsula. Here, too, came the Greeks from their rich colony of Marseilles, and, later still, the Romans, not yet thinking of conquest. And thus under their own laws and in communities not much recruited from the shifting population about them, the miners have gone on working, paying their tribute to Cæsar or Caswallon, to Saxon Prince or Norman Duke; but finding, in later days, their old free bond gradually subjected to the feudal influences of the period.

In the reign of John, we find that the royal dues were farmed out to the Jews, who settled in some numbers on the scene of their exactions. Under their skilful management the produce of the mines was greatly increased, and Richard, Earl of Cornwall, John's younger son, was so enriched by the tribute of his rich principality, that he was enabled to purchase the suc-

cession to the Empire and the barbaric diadem of the King of the Romans. When the Jews were expelled from England, those of Cornwall went mournfully forth from this land of Goshen, and from that time the miners' tribute fell off woefully in amount, although the miners themselves may have been no losers by the change. Through it all the tinnerns had kept up their own free organisation, and, combined with the miners of Devon, had held a general convention on Hengston Hill at intervals of seven years. But by the Thirty-third Edward the First, the tinnerns of Cornwall were made a separate body, with representatives chosen by the four stannary towns—namely, Launceston, Lostwithiel, Truro, and Helston; and at a later date, in the reign of Charles the Second, Penzance was made a fifth representative town.

Another element in the population were the Scandinavian rovers who, in the bays and creeks of this indented coast, found safe and congenial habitations. As the old saying has it:

By Tre, Pol, and Pen, you shall know the Cornish men.

These are all Celtic prefixes, and mark the original British settlements. Equally by bay and fiord, and nase or ness, we may recognise the presence of an alien element on the coast, and although the old Celtic names greatly predominate, yet in Helston and Helford river, in Dodman Point and Whitesand Bay, we recognise names of the real Northern type. And still the coast population is chiefly Celtic—not rovers and seafarers like the men of Devon, but hugging the coast with their small fishing-craft, and by nature inhospitable—perhaps also taught by harsh experience—to those who are cast upon their shores. A fatal coast to seamen has long been this iron-bound promontory, whose shape has given its ancient name to the county. It is Cernyw—the county of the Cornabii, of the Cornweallas, all derived from the cor or cornu, which in Welsh and Latin denotes a horn—the British Cape Horn, in fact, and as rugged and dangerous to early navigators, and its inhabitants as cruel as that rude cape among the Patagonian savages.

From Padstow Point to Lundy Light  
Is a watery grave by day or night.

And the inhumanity that would leave the shipwrecked stranger to perish while busy appropriating the floating wreckage is justified in the cruel saying:

Save a stranger from the sea,  
And he'll turn your enemy.

It is not so long, indeed, since the dialect of Welsh, known as Cornish, was still a living, spoken tongue. Old Dolly Pentreath, who died about 1788, was the last of the Cornweallas who could speak her native language freely.

Old Dol Penreath, one hundred age and two,  
Both born and in Paul parish buried too.

Old Dol's cottage was at Mousehold, not far from Penzance, and she had a reputation for a knowledge of the black art, which she exercised in telling fortunes and selling charms, although her ostensible occupation was that of a fish-hawker.

Old superstitions, and a belief in sorcery and witchcraft, still linger in many parts. The famous parson, Hawker, of Morwenstow, the writer of some of the most stirring English ballads of modern times, tells us how, in his day, the parson was looked upon as an exorcist, familiar with the powers of darkness if officially their opponent. Many will remember Parson Hawker's story of the farmer and Cherry Parnell, a reputed witch; the farmer having had a colt struck dead by lightning, presumably by her influence, thus addresses his pastor in mild remonstrance: "I do think, when I've paid tithe and rate faithfully all these years, such ones as old Cherry Parnell never ought to be allowed to meddle with such things as thunder and lightning."

Equally characteristic of the old manners and customs of the Cornish land—where, as in Wales, the old parish clergy often were of a very lively and festive disposition—is the story of the Cornish parson whose Bishop remonstrates with him as to certain accusations of riotous living—actually fights in the vicarage. "Lor', my dear, doant y' believe it. When they begin fighting, I take and turn 'em out into the churchyard."

And yet the land is everywhere studded with churches, whose titles recall the early ages of faith and enthusiasm, and the temporal rule of the saints over the land—saints, many of whose names are unknown beyond the narrow limits of their earthly pilgrimage. St. Germans, indeed, in its omantic dell among the waters of the great Plymouth estuary, commemorates the famous Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, who visited Cornwall some time in the fifth century, and led the natives to a great victory over the heathen. But who knows anything about St. Brecock or St. Stithian, and where shall we find the lives of St. Buryan, or St. Erth, or any account of

the doings of St. Mubyn, or St. Wenn? St. Columb, indeed, is more familiar, though, probably, a Breton saint of the same name as our Columba of Iona is here commemorated.

Indeed, it is rather in Brittany than in England, or even in Wales, that we shall find the analogue of the early institutions of Christian Cornwall, a land of saints, and cenobites, and monasteries at a time when all the rest of the neighbouring land acknowledged the stern sway of the gods of the Teutonic mythology. The monastery was then the religious centre of the district, and the abbot ruled over the country round, while a sacred circle of several miles around the convent enjoyed the most precious immunities. Nor was the convent merely an abode of learning, or even of devotion; it was also an industrial community, the centre of the simple home manufactures of the period, the academy of the bizarre and yet not ungraceful art of that remote period.

The crumbling foundations of one of these ancient religious settlements may be found by the adventurous yachtsman cruising among our British Hesperides. On Tresco, a small island of the Scilly group, in a beautiful situation by a fresh-water lake, near the residence of the proprietor of the island, some relics may be found of these early settlers. These had perished, probably, in the piratic visitations of the heathen Danes; but the supremacy of the convent over the neighbouring isles was still acknowledged when King Athelstan repopled the ruined settlement with Saxon monks. Later on, the monastery was abandoned, and the lordship of the islands transferred to Tavistock Abbey. Not of the whole, however, for some of the islands remained in the possession of the Crown, which farmed them at a yearly rent of three hundred puffins. As the rent in kind could be transmuted to a cash payment of six shillings and eightpence, the then value of a puffin may easily be calculated.

The Scilly Islands themselves are worth a visit, and if the yacht is not available, there is steam communication from Penzance. On calm summer days there is beauty enough in the emerald seas, crystal-clear, and showing deep down the rocky floor of bay and inlet, with sands of every dazzling colour, and a wealth of life in fishes and zoophytes, where swim the red mullet and the John Dory, with great cuttle-fish, and, perhaps, basking on a solitary



rock, a seal, the last of a once numerous colony. In winter-time it is, however, a wild and lonely scene, where the surges beat high against the savage rocks, and the islands, wrapped in mist and flying sea-drift, seem in danger of being overwhelmed altogether in the waves. Then the talk is of shipwrecks and disasters at sea, and you may hear the story of Sir Cloudeley Shovel and the four British men-of-war, all wrecked and perished on these cruel rocks.

It was on the night of the 22nd of October, 1707, that Sir Cloudeley Shovel, the Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet—who had begun life as a cabin-boy, or powder-monkey, on board ship, and had fought his way up to the highest rank—was sailing for Plymouth, in the Association, at the head of his squadron, coming from the blockade of Toulon, with the wind fair up the Channel, but a dense fog and pitchy darkness everywhere. And thus the great war-ship ran full tilt on the Gilstone Rock, and was shattered to fragments, while the Eagle, the Romney, and the Firebrand, in her wake, followed the fatal lead, and broke to pieces one after the other, embayed among the rocks in Porthelok Cove. Some five-and-twenty men of the whole crews escaped by clambering up the rocks, but next morning the shores of St. Mary's Isle were strewn with corpses, and among them was recognised that of the brave old Admiral. The fishermen of the island gave him a sailor's grave among the sands, but he had a brave funeral afterwards in Westminster Abbey, where his monument is still to be seen.

An earlier story is that told by Leland of the total depopulation of St. Agnes, which has now, however, a small colony of lighthouse-keepers and fishermen. It seems that the whole of the inhabitants of the island, men, women, and children, five households in all, left their homes one fine summer morning, put out their fires, left their doors on the latch, and rowed away to make merry at a marriage-feast on St. Mary's Isle. But those hearths were never warm again, and no footstep crossed the thresholds ever more; for as they were sailing home a sudden squall rushed upon them from the wild Atlantic, and all went down together—the life of the whole community, with its joys and sorrows, its loves and jealousies, all being quenched in the depths of the fierce, relentless sea.

A fortress of Queen Elizabeth's time, on St. Mary's Isle, which may have fired a salvo at the Spanish Armada as it passed, is still held by a small garrison with batteries and works of a more modern kind about it. Here, too, may be traced the fortifications thrown up by Sir John Grenville for the Crown, in 1649, when the islands were held against the Parliament, and became a rendezvous for the privateers that preyed upon the commerce of the coast, almost entirely in the hands of the Puritan party. Admiral Blake, however, with a fleet, brought the islands to a surrender, and they have not since declared war against the mainland.

But if we are in search of a people of proud and independent spirit we must go to Fowey, probably, as its name seems to indicate, an early Scandinavian settlement, and thus naturally long distinguished for its adventurous seamen, alike ready to trade or fight on occasion. The harbour, deep and landlocked, runs up between rocks and headlands, where ruined towers crown the points, and once upon a time a heavy chain was stretched across the entrance to keep all safe and snug within. As free as the wind and as bold were the gallants of Fowey, sailing and plundering where they listed along the Norman seaboard, or upon the Spanish coast. At times, too, they waged war with their own countrymen. As when the ships of Fowey, sailing by Rye and Winchelsea about Edward the Third's time, would vaile no bonnet, for the Cinque Ports then stood upon their dignity, and required that their flag should be saluted by passing vessels. Upon this the men of Rye and Winchelsea swarmed out in their galleys to avenge the insult, and there was a stout running fight, in which Fowey claimed the victory. As a trophy, in true chivalric style, Fowey forthwith assumed the arms of Rye and Winchelsea, and flaunted their new flag in the faces of the Cinque Ports men. Whence arose more fights, no doubt, the particulars of which are not recorded.

Again, when the war with France was ended, in Edward the Fourth's time, Fowey still continued it, and captured all French vessels as lawful prize. But here the King was obliged to interfere. He had been richly paid for the peace, and more crowns were coming in if it was kept, so that he was naturally indignant. Being wanting the power, perhaps, to punish the Fowey men himself, he commissioned the rival port of Dartmouth to bring the

recusants to reason. And the Dartmouth men carried off their rivals' ships under the King's warrant, and from that time the gallants of Fowey had to bate their pretensions.

Close by Fowey, immediately above the town, stands the Plas, the fine old seat of the Trefrys, which has more than once been fortified against the French, and which, from its name, and the relics found about it, was probably the seat of the ancient princes of West Wales.

Here, too, occurred a notable incident in the civil wars, when the Earl of Essex, surrounded by the King's troops, abandoned his army and took ship for Plymouth. After his departure the Parliamentary cavalry managed to gallop through the enemy's lines with little loss, and so escaped to fight again, but the infantry surrendered; while it seemed to those around as if the triumph of the royal cause were fully assured. Robert Herrick wrote a poem thereupon, addressing the king as bringing victory in his train, and so the Cavaliers went on, drinking healths, and singing songs, and making the most of their victories as lawful occasions of festivity, till they found another kind of enemy in the field.

It was not in loyalty to the Stuarts, as might be supposed, that the neighbouring port of Charlestown received its present name, but from its founder, Charles Rashleigh, who about a century ago made a harbour of the old Porthmaur. The cause of all this activity is to be found in the discovery of a great bed of china-clay, which was made by a Quaker named Cookworthy, who, in watching the founding of some bells at Fowey, noticed the peculiar conduct of the clay under strong heat. Perhaps it would have been better for the Quaker if he had minded his own business instead of inconsistently running after the founding of bells. For Cookworthy forthwith began a porcelain manufacture at Plymouth, the pieces of which are now much sought by collectors, but which were not in any great demand when they were made. Anyhow, the manufacture failed, and Bristol took it up and failed also. Then Josiah Wedgwood got hold of the clay, and made it answer his purpose. And thus there is still a trade more or less brisk between Charlestown and the pottery districts.

Then close by we have St. Austell, with more china-clay, with tin and lead mines all about—a veritable metropolis of the mining world, familiar to many swarthy

captains of mines scattered over the known world; for wherever there is digging or delving for gold, silver, copper, lead, or tin, there you may find the Cornish captain controlling the drifts and diggings, and holding in his hand the keys of the underground world.

Near St. Austell, too, are two famous barrows, the Cock and Hen Barrows—great mounds commemorating some mighty chiefs of old—on high ground, from which it is said all Cornwall may be seen. The Hen is Welsh and means old, so that the mount was an antiquity to the Celts themselves, but the Cock is due to the imaginative Saxon, who thought it unnatural that the Hen should live in single blessedness.

Then there is Probus, on high ground, with its fine perpendicular church-tower, recalling Magdalen, Oxford, a noble architectural monument, the pride of the men of Cornwall, who are not rich in such things. Those primitive old saints of theirs were accustomed to build their churches with their own hands. There is a legend of two saints, some say St. Peter and St. Paul, who, coming to a broad river, separated, and began to build each a church on his own side. They had only one hammer between them, or perhaps trowel, but on second thoughts they did not use mortar, and shaped the rough stones they picked up with this single hammer. Well, in this strait they pitched the hammer from one to another across, say, a mile or so of water, and so the building went merrily on. But the minor saints, at any rate, could not be expected to do anything very great in the way of church-building.

In these latter days we have the unaccustomed spectacle of a new cathedral rising from its foundation. The diocese of Cornwall was created in 1876, and already, at Truro, a fine cathedral has been built, with a massive central tower two hundred and fifty feet high, with a nave of nine bays, a spacious western front, a great transept, and fine porch. The old parish church of St. Mary, spacious and well lighted, of the later perpendicular style, has almost disappeared to make room for the cathedral, but the south aisle of the old church has been incorporated in the new building.

At the mouth of the fine estuary that stretches inland as far as Truro, whose Celtic title recalls the ancient river-name, for it is clearly Tre-evro, the town on the Ebro, or the Eure—at the mouth of this

river, which it seems ridiculous to call the Fal, stands Falmouth, a busy port of comparatively modern origin. Sir Walter Raleigh, it is said, was the first to mark the capabilities of the site for a port, although, in his time, there were only a couple of houses on the spot and a blacksmith's shop. The place was then known as Penny-come-quick, and a trivial legend accounted for the title as given it by a woman who sold ale there, and found the pennies come so quick that her barrels were dry when her chief patron paid her a visit. But it goes without saying that the name is essentially Welsh. However, the owner of the neighbouring lands, Sir John Killigrew, taking note of Sir Walter's suggestion, began building operations here in 1613, and, ere long, the place became of some commercial importance. In 1660, Falmouth it became by royal proclamation, and soon after, by royal favour—for Killigrew was a well-known name in the merry Court of King Charles—the town was endowed with municipal privileges. The port became a great resort of Dutch shipping, and still does a considerable trade in the products of mines and quarries. Pendennis Castle, on a lofty mount, defends the approach to the estuary—a castle still armed with England's thunder, though of a rather antiquated type. On the opposite side of the estuary another old castle, of the time of Henry the Eighth, crosses its fire with that of Pendennis.

Out of Falmouth Bay opens the lonely inlet of the Helford river, with ancient villages scattered along its shore, and among the barren granite hills is one that bears the name of Constantine—perhaps from the days of old Rome, as a puny rival to Byzantium. And this reminds us that descendants from the Emperors of the lower empire are still to be met with in the Cornish land.

In the church of Landulph, on the Tamar, is a mural monument to Theodore Paleologus, who died in 1636, leaving a numerous issue by his wife, Mary, who was the daughter of William Ball, of Hadlye, in Suffolk. Theodore was sixth in descent from the Emperor Manuel the Second, and among his collateral lineage was Constantine, the last of the Emperors of New Rome, who was killed in the storming of the city by the Turks.

A few miles across the peninsula that stretches out to meet the Atlantic surges, and is crowned by the strange igneous cliffs that form the Lizard Head, a point

often hailed with delight by the homeward-bound voyager as the first glimpse of Old England, but not often visited from the landward side—across this peninsula lies Helston, an ancient town, once noted for its curious festival, called Helston Fary, on the 8th of May, when the chief inhabitants of the town, the ladies of the community at the head of the procession, would dance down the high-street, crowned with garlands of flowers, and entering every house, distributed kisses and flowers to its fortunate inmates. The festival is still kept up, although not, perhaps, with the old happy freedom and gaiety.

Half a mile south of Helston the river expands into a fine lake-like sheet of water called Loe Pool, which is cut off from the sea by a natural breakwater of pebbles, and following the iron-bound coast, we come to Marazion, or Market Jew, concerning the name of which Professor Max Muller discourses pleasantly in his Chips. Suffice it to say that he disposes of its claim to Hebrew origin. Just off Marazion lies St. Michael's Mount.

St. Michael's Mount who does not know,  
That wards the western coast?

Here, surely, dwelt the fierce Cornish giant, who, striding over the sands, visited and devastated the mainland, and was slain by Jack the Giant-Killer. The ruins of an ancient monastery, as well as the remains of a feudal castle, crown the steep rocky mount which has often afforded a refuge for fugitives from political troubles. Here came the Earl of Oxford and other knights, fugitives from Barnet and Tewkesbury, when the red rose was trodden underfoot, and crushed in blood and dust. Gaining admittance under the guise of pilgrims to the fortress-convent, they took possession of the castle, and held out till they obtained their freedom from the Yorkist King. Here, too, in the Cornish rebellion of Edward the Sixth's time, a sort of pendant to Kett's rebellion in the Eastern Counties, the chief families of Cornwall took refuge. The insurgents, whose only artillery were bows and arrows, took the castle notwithstanding.

In earlier days a bond of spiritual allegiance connected the monastery with the more famous abbey of St. Michael's on the rocky island of the Breton gulf, still an object of pilgrimage for the Cornishman's brother Celts on the mainland.

And now we come to Penzance, the most westerly town in England, which was taken and burnt by the Spaniards when Har-

Quatre was fighting for his crown with our Elizabeth's grudging help. A pleasant resting-place is Penzance, with a climate of Mediterranean mildness—a town where railways come to an end, and one solitary highway runs on to the mighty rocks of the Land's End.

And rounding this rugged cape of storms, the rocky northern coast of Cornwall stretches before us, with scattered fishing-villages in its creeks and hollows, right away to Arthur's mystic seat.

Full charged with old world wonders  
From dusk Tintagel thunders,  
A note that smites and sunders,  
The hard frore fields of air.

### A WIRE FRAME.

#### A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

MEANTIME, I was no nearer getting the thing back than at first. My visitor, who had left her seat, was buttoning her gloves and smoothing her muff, apparently preparing to leave.

"I request you to tell me," I said, "what I am expected to do in this matter. It seems you do not intend to restore the frame, and I have not heard yet how you got it."

"Well, sir, that's simple enough. I had our own figure, for my young ladies are mostly one size, and what fits the one does not go far wrong with the others. I had it ordered at Salvage and Sample's, and they were to send it last week; and I was down at the junction—it's not a mile from Squire Acton's. I was down to see a brother of mine that's guard on the upper line, only he got a run down to Southport, goin' away to get married, and sailing in the Scotch boat that night; and a heap of fuss there was at the junction, three trains meeting, and I was talking to him at the van-door, for his train had to wait a bit, and I sees the figure. 'Oh,' says, 'leave that out; there's what I've been waiting for these three days.' 'What is it?' says he, for the way it was lying it looked like a big brown parcel, and I was, may say, inside the van, and I just quickly lifted it. 'It's my young ladies' figure,' says I, and I stepped out, and he handed it to me. There's the way I got it—of course, thinking it was from Salvage and Sample's, or would I have taken it, do you think?—and our groom was down at the junction with a pony-trap, and I just took home with me; and then, yesterday, my young ladies' aunt, Miss Moore—she lives with them. you know: she's Missus's sister

—she was down to meet someone at the train, and she saw the bill stuck up, and brought one of them home, and what made the Captain so merry about it was it saying the information was to be given to Jeremiah Hawkins, Esquire, Royal Hotel, Conway."

"It doesn't say that!" I exclaimed, whereupon my informant pulled a copy of the bill from her reticule, and laid it before me.

Had the station-master who issued the bills been present just then, he would have heard what I thought of him for thus needlessly aggravating the feelings of a quiet man, who asked nothing of his fellow-creatures but to be allowed to go on his way without notice. I did afterwards tell him something of the kind.

"I'm going down to Fixem's, to pay them for the figure," continued the young woman. "They may be proud to see the ladies' own maid from Acton Hall goin' to them, though it's not with my will, to give them money, and I wish you a good-morning, sir." And, with a sweeping curtsy, she was gone.

An hour or two afterwards, by the time I thought my late visitor was well out of the way, I went down Moon Street, intending, for the last time, to enter the hateful Fixem's, whose carelessness in either addressing that ill-starred figure imperfectly, or not addressing it at all, had caused the most of my annoyance, and just as I came in sight of the shop, I saw the "own maid" to the Miss Actons whisking out of it, carrying her head very high indeed.

Assuming an unconcerned and slightly stern demeanour, I went in, and was received by the shop-walking gentleman with intense deference, not unmingled, so it seemed to me, with a strong inclination to laugh.

In a few words I desired him to have Mrs. Tattleton informed of the loss of her frame—by this time I could scarcely bring myself to name it—and to take her instructions as to replacing it. And then I retired with as much dignity as I could assume, resolving to discover the most out-of-the-way place possible to which I could retreat. I had done with Hazeldene; my lease was just out, and on any terms, unless those Tattletons left it, I would.

Why could people not let me alone? It was all I asked of them, and to obtain this small boon I was likely to be made a fugitive and a vagabond.

Life, as Mrs. Brassey describes it, in some of the South Sea Islands might be bearable, but no one should know if I went there. People might have commissions to be executed even there.

Early next week the ball was to be held, but I would be out of the way long before that. I hate hotel life. One can never tell what disagreeable acquaintances one may meet with, but to go back to Hazeldene, and encounter those four Tattleton women, and explain to them the mishaps of their wire frame!—never had the Major who owned them, in his most warlike mood, seemed half so terrible an enemy.

Of course I had done with the wire frame now, but I could not get over the notion that everyone knew how I had first lost the thing, and then had gone in vain to look for it. A man with a family to think of would have got over it all sooner, and I revert to my sensations, because, when the waiter came in with breakfast the next morning, and setting a hot cover-dish down on the table, said he had brought me "the two grilled legs of a goose," just for a moment I thought he did it to quiz me.

With my feet on the fender, and the day's papers to search for out-going steamers I was realising some sense of comfort, when I heard quick steps approaching the door of my private room—I never use the coffee-room—and as rapidly as if he had been shot from something, Harry Sandford came in.

"Hallo, old fellow, here you are! I was afraid you'd be gone, and here's Vincent Acton wanting to be introduced to you!" and a nice-looking young fellow came forward and offered me his hand. "The Squire being master of the hunt," continued Harry, "we feel answerable for the success of the ball, and we're beating up for volunteers for the decorations, and all sorts of things. Come along. Get your boots on; we've no time to lose!"

My feeble remonstrances were in vain: "I was of no use, knew nothing about decorations, never had anything to do with a ball." All the same I was hurried off, young Acton laughing heartily at Harry's impetuosity.

He pulled himself up half-way down stairs with, "Oh, I say, though, the hotel people say they are so full they can't give us a private room for luncheon. Will you let us have yours? The ladies are all with us, you see—"

"And you'll lunch with us, of course?" put in young Acton.

Was I never to be let alone! Once again I felt myself trapped and powerless. Ladies, indeed! And positively the very ladies who knew all about the wire frame—had got it, in fact, pared down to their own dimensions, and had seen the advertisements desiring it to be brought to me. Once in the Sandwich Islands I should be able to forget all about it, but just now it was intolerable.

"Miss Moore, Miss Acton, Miss Mabel Acton, Miss Jessie Acton," I was presented to each in form, as they were to be found among piled-up ball-seats, mounds of evergreens, and small stacks of shining armoury brought from the barracks to aid in the decorations. Over these latter, soldiers were keeping guard, and several young officers, who had come to help, were going about making themselves agreeable, if not very useful.

Harry made no secret of it, at least with me, about Miss Mabel, actually presenting me to her as her future cousin. A very pretty creature was Miss Mabel, for, little as I know about girls, I can appreciate a bright, beaming face, with soft blue eyes and sunny hair framing the delicate features that a fitting blush seems so well to become. The sisters were curiously alike, and I could believe what their maid had informed me—that "what fitted the one would not go far wrong on the other," so much were they the same size, but Mabel was the prettiest.

Whether from good taste or from being so busy, I cannot say, but none of them ever in the slightest way alluded to that odious frame, and I could only hope that the fact of its having gone to them from vulgar Fitem's might in no way injure the future appearance of such very attractive girls.

And their aunt—only no one called her aunt; it was Cicely here, and Cicely there, and nothing seemed right unless she said it was.

I must be excused if just this once I, a man whose desire it has been to own nothing of sentiment or feeling, and who has striven to persuade himself that he "cares for nobody and nobody cares for him"—if I this once quote poetry, and describe Cicely Moore as "a perfect woman, nobly planned, to warn, to comfort, and command."

Her manner of gentle firmness, her opinions given with such soft decision, her intuitive knowledge of the best way to do everything, and the unassuming manner—

which she took the lead in all the arrangements, and settled what other people could not make up their minds about—why, a tenth part of it would have turned the heads of all the Tattletons together.

From my being told off to be Miss Moore's assistant, I saw more of all this than I should otherwise have done; and though I had no intention of going to the ball, I felt it would be almost worth while to do so to be in her company again. In person she was taller than her nieces, with a good figure, as straight as a rush, and an absolutely faultless foot and ankle. It might be, too, that she was scarcely as pretty as they, though the difference in years might have something to do with that, yet was she a fair and comely woman, with sweetness and intelligence in every glance of her hazel eyes and every curve of her finely-moulded mouth.

The luncheon in my sitting-room was a very merry affair. I had little anticipated any such party when, a few hours before, I sat silent and solitary over the "grilled legs of a goose."

Vincent Acton, who seemed host on the occasion, brought the young officers with him, and afterwards we all returned to another hour or two's work at the ball-room, which was beginning to show what its appearance would be when completed. Before we had been long there on this second occasion, young Acton came up to me, and invited me to accompany them home, and stay at Acton Hall until the ball came off, which would be four days hence. He seemed to take it for granted I was going to this ball, which it appeared to me I had become involved in without my own consent. They were to return home by the evening train, and nothing would satisfy either him or Harry but that I should go with them: all remonstrance on the ground of my having left home hastily, and being unprovided with proper changes of apparel, being met by the suggestion that my housekeeper could send a portmanteau down to the junction, and that I had better write a note to her in time for the outgoing mail.

Thus it came to pass that my study of the route to Honolulu was postponed, and the hours that I proposed devoting to *The Tourist's Guide* were spent in the midst of a merry family party assembled in a large old country house, with all the extra zest and mirth going on among them that is

apt to accompany the first wedding among the young people of a household.

Not until friendly—I might almost say intimate—relations had been established among us was the history of the wire-frame adverted to, and then it was treated with such genuine fun and good-natured railery that the whole affair looked different, and the shrinking soreness I felt on the subject was allayed.

The Squire and Mrs. Acton, who were kindness itself, received me as Harry's relative, and made much of me accordingly. Once in the house, I must not leave it until after the ball, to which I must now go perforce. I had not been in a ballroom for twelve years, and it seemed to me that my whole life was suddenly becoming reversed.

On the morning of the great day we went up to Conway by the morning train, having engaged rooms at the hotel, and as I saw the Miss Actons' "own maid" flitting about in all the importance of her calling on an occasion like the present, and thought of the last time I had seen her in the same place, I almost doubted my own identity.

It was something to see Harry's face when Mabel came down dressed; it was absolutely radiant. And certainly she was a lovely little vision, all in some ethereal drapery, like the blue of the summer sky appearing through a filmy cloud. She had pearls on her neck and arms, and in her hair white heath that Harry had got for her from some London florist.

Jessie, who was making her debut, was all in white, and Miss Acton in the pink brocade I had heard of as pinned on that miserable wire figure.

The Squire and Mrs. Acton came up by a later train. He brought his deputy-lieutenant's uniform with him, and Mrs. Acton was quite the county lady, in velvet and diamonds.

But to me none looked as Miss Moore did, with her graceful figure and dignified yet unassuming deportment. Her rich robe was dove-coloured, with a silver sheen on it.

The braids of her bright chestnut hair were fastened by an opal star, and her necklace and bracelets were set with the same.

It was so long since I had danced that I had forgotten the "why, when, and where" of the art, and so I told Vincent Acton when, in his capacity of steward, he wanted to find partners for me.

"Will you dance with Cicely, then?"

he said; "she'll be sure to keep you all right;" and he led me over to her.

It happened that a set of quadrilles was next to be danced, and, some way or other, she helped me through them.

"You are not superstitious," I said to her, looking at the opals on her wrist; "some people would be afraid to wear those stones."

"They can bring me nothing but good," she said, "for they were left to me by a relation whose memory is venerated among us for her goodness;" and, slipping off a bracelet, she directed my attention to the deep shadows in one of the stones.

We were sitting in a rather retired place, slightly shut off from the crowd by the folds of some flags that hung there, and as I returned the bracelet to her and she held her wrist for me to fasten the clasp, who should pass by but two of the Miss Tattletons!

Their bows to me were of the slightest, and their looks expressed withering scorn.

I thought they must be angry about their wire frame, for, of course, it was nothing to them whose bracelet I was fastening.

I did not dance again, but often during the night I had opportunities for sitting beside Miss Moore, who seemed to me the nicest woman I had known since my own mother died, and I found myself speculating on how it could possibly be that she had been allowed to remain unmarried. In fact I forgot all about the route to the Sandwich Islands, and found myself continually wondering what Miss Moore thought of me, or whether she thought of me at all.

I had not expected to return to Acton Hall after the ball, but I was carried off among the rest. It would take them a day or two, they said, to talk it all over, and they wanted to hear my impressions.

Then a Sunday intervened, and I must stay over that day.

Monday morning's post brought me a letter which I here transcribe, merely remarking that on reading it I felt thankful that I had sent a notice to my landlord on the right day, as any return to Hazeldene was now, more than ever, out of the question.

The letter ran thus:

"MRS. TATTLETON presents her compliments to Mr. Hawkins, and begs to express her regret for having troubled him with the commission which had such an unfortunate ending. Unfortunate, at least, so far as those are concerned for whose benefit the required article had been designed, though probably the ladies who obtained

it had reason to congratulate themselves on its capture, as, owing to the hunt ball, the demand for similar articles was far in advance of the supply that was readily to be procured. Mrs. Tattleton is happy to say that her daughters' ingenuity and skill rendered them independent of the assistance thus strangely transferred from them to others. There is, however, a more serious matter on which Mrs. Tattleton feels it her duty to request from Mr. Hawkins an explicit declaration.

"For some time past his attention to her daughters, while gratifying to a mother's feelings, have yet been a source of anxiety owing to her being unable to distinguish clearly to which of her dear girls it was directed; and their peculiar unselfishness renders each unwilling to appropriate to herself that which in sisterly kindness she should, perhaps, yield to another. Had the dear Major lived, Mrs. Tattleton's maternal feelings might, perhaps, have rendered her more ambitious; but her orphan girls have only their mother to look to, and on their behalf she requests from Mr. Hawkins an avowal as to the object of his marked and unmistakable attention, which, of course, were the Major alive, he would long since have seen was due to his daughters, and have looked for accordingly."

I was standing at the library-window as I read this letter, and, just as I reached the end of it, Harry Sandford, passing along outside, happened to look in, paused a moment, and then turning, with a few of his rapid steps was beside me.

"What's wrong, old fellow?" he said. "Who's dead?"

"Nobody, that I know; but—just read this."

Harry took the letter, read it, flung himself into a large chair near, and burst into such uproarious laughter that I really thought he would bring the household about us.

"Don't make such a noise," I said: "you'll have them all in."

Whereupon he rolled his handkerchief in a ball, stuffed it into his mouth, and declared he'd choke, if I didn't let him laugh out.

"Do be sensible, Harry," I cried, "and tell me what I am to say to her."

"Sensible!" he gasped. "Do you ~~mean~~ to marry them—to marry them all!"

"Will you be rational, Harry, if you can? I'm not going to marry anybody."

"Aren't you, indeed! Don't be ~~so~~ sure. Then write and tell them to go."



Turkey, and get a bashaw to take them all off hand together. Serionally, is the old lady crazy?"

"Not unless she has become so lately."

"Did you, though—tell me, Jerry—did you make a simpleton of yourself with these people?"

"Seriously, I avoided them in every way I could, and as to making a simpleton of myself, though I believe I've been one all my life, I have not been one as regards them. I assure you I kept them off as well as I could."

"Well, if you have a clear conscience, we'll soon see how to settle her. Let me write for you—a copy, I mean;" and he drew a small writing-table to him, and presently handed me the following note, telling me to put in as much more pepper as I liked.

"Mr. Hawkins presents his compliments to Mrs. Tattleton, and in reply to the first part of her letter, has only to say that the figure which she requested him to bring to Hazeldene, being from its size not such as he could conveniently carry, and not being properly addressed, went astray without Mr. Hawkins being in any way answerable for its doing so. The second part of Mrs. Tattleton's letter is altogether unintelligible to Mr. Hawkins, as he is unconscious of having given her any cause for anxiety, and can in no way understand how he has occasioned any strain to be put upon the sisterly affection which Mrs. Tattleton describes as so peculiarly belonging to her daughters."

"There," said he as he finished, "that ought to cool their ardour. I've seen some queer things, but nothing so bare-faced as this. Some of these people were at the ball, I think;" and I told him how two of them scowled at me as they passed, when I was fastening Miss Moore's bracelet.

"That's capital," said Harry; "that's what frightened them." Then changing to a tone of seriousness, he put his hand on my shoulder and asked me to tell him "why I lived alone instead of making some good woman happy."

"Good women are scarce," I replied, "and if I found one I mightn't be able to make her happy; besides, I have determined to keep myself free from all needless care and trouble, and when once you are entangled with other people, you never know what will befall you."

"Then, from the fear of encountering trouble, you shut yourself out from love and home?"

"From love, perhaps, but a single man can have a home."

"And what is it worth, if it be in a palace, without someone to share it—someone to think of you when you are away, to welcome your return, to receive and give you confidence, to soothe and elevate you by their love and trust?"

"No wonder you are eloquent on the subject, Harry, for Mabel may well inspire you; but you have seen enough, surely, of life to know what many women are."

"Including those at Hazeldene," he said, laughing. "But never mind the many; find one true heart, and hold to it."

"Such advice would have come better ten years ago; I shall soon be an old man."

"Old! You're just in your prime, and you've plenty of money. That lawsuit went all right, didn't it?"

"Yes; they established the will."

"See here now, Jerry. It's not often I can get you alone to speak to. I have fancied you are just a little struck with Cicely Moore. There's no better woman living."

"I don't think she would be complimented by your speaking of her to me."

"Well, I can't say about that, but I do know she's one of the best, truest, most unselfish women living. She was engaged when very young, and her lover died, and she has just lived for the good of other people ever since. Now that you are acquainted, if you could only win her, what a happy fellow you would be! Of course, it's different with me and my little Mabel; but if you could get Cicely——"

I was just saying I did not want anyone, when Mabel appeared in her riding-dress, and told Harry the horses were at the door.

In February, Harry was married. The ground was covered with crisp frozen snow, and every branch and twig glittered like frosted silver in the rays of a wintry sun. It was a large wedding, and it was succeeded in the evening by a dance, to which the neighbouring gentry came in great force.

During the winter I had often been at Acton Hall, having fixed myself for a time in the town of Conway.

Not once, since writing to Mrs. Tattleton, had I seen any of that family. Why she should have addressed me as she did, I never could understand, for she must have known, as well as I did, there was no justification for her doing so.

Harry Sandford never renewed the conversation about Miss Moore. Had he done so, I should have felt awkward about going to the Hall. In fact, it would probably have wholly prevented my doing so; but nothing occurred in any way to interfere with the easy and pleasant manner with which they all received me, owing, of course, to my relationship to Harry, who was so soon to be one of themselves.

It was the evening of the wedding, which had gone off cheerily, for there was not to be much separation in the matter, as Harry's regiment was likely to be in England for some years, having lately completed a long term of foreign service.

I was sitting beside Miss Moore, who again had on her opal ornaments, and I remarked to her that I had not seen her wear them since the night of the hunt-ball.

She seemed amused at my remarking this, and replied that she always reserved the opals for important occasions.

"They are curious stones," she said. "They never seem to me to be twice alike. But if their changing shadows do indeed foretell events, that must always be so."

"They would be valuable talismans if that were so," I replied.

"I don't know that. I would rather be ignorant of what the future is bringing until it comes. It is a pretty fancy, though," she continued. "But what nonsense! Though there does seem to be something in opals to give rise to it. Look at this central stone," turning her hand to me. "What a depth of shadow there is in it! And yet light seems to glance from behind the shadow. I am almost inclined to think that light and shade change places in opals, for I have often looked at the deep shade in this one, and I never remarked that latent light before."

"May I offer my interpretation of the mystic glow?" I said.

"Yes. What is it?"

"That it symbolises the light it is in your power to shed where mistaken views and lonely isolation have long cast dark shadows."

She looked quickly up at me, but her glance as quickly fell, and she grew suddenly pale.

"Miss Moore," I said—"Cicely let me call you, could you accept the devotion—the

deep reverential love of one so vastly your inferior as I am!"

I thought afterwards it was not a very graceful mode of proposing, but the words came without study or preparation straight from my heart. In a low tone she murmured:

"You take me very much by surprise. I had no idea of this."

"Let the new light in the gem be a true symbol," I said; "you could scarcely make sunshine in a shadier place than my life has long been, you can never be more valued—more truly loved."

In another minute Cicely was gone. The music of the Lancers was beginning, and the partner to whom she was engaged came to claim her.

I don't know how she felt, she looked pale and grave, but my whole being seemed one wild tumult of joy, for Cicely had not repulsed me—had not said no.

Not again that night had I a chance of speaking to her, but on the following day we walked up and down the laurel path-way, and told each other of our thoughts, and feelings, and aspirations, and I felt something of what it would be to have the companionship of a noble-minded woman.

I close this story in a different mood from that in which I began it. Not meaning to moralise, there is just one little remark I wish to make. On what small hinges our lives turn! But for Mrs Tattleton's giving me that commission, I should, probably, never have known Cicely Moore. Harry Sandford would have gone on his way, and got married, without ever thinking of me, if we had not met at the hotel; I doubt if he even knew where I was living. And, if the wire frame had not gone astray, I should not have been there, but in my house at Hazeldene.

Trifles! Yet they have changed my whole life, and another life as well—that of Cicely.

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1885.

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LITTLE COUNT TISTA.

By "RITA."

CHAPTER I.

It was an old, old house, and it stood on the hill-side some five miles out of that great city which was the Mother of the world. It was so old and so grey; and so shut in by the gnarled olive-trees, and the high hedges, and tangles of wild roses, and thickets of arbutus; that it was well-nigh a forgotten place. The paths that led to it were too steep for horses, and the great gates, with their broken sculptures and carved shields, were rarely opened. The whole place had fallen into decay like the race who owned it, and now in the sultry, sickly heat of the late summer, it seemed given over to silence and isolation.

There was not a breath of air to be felt. The grasses were burnt and dry; the very trees looked parched. The old broken walls and the stone of the fountain in the courtyard were like hot iron to the touch.

The cicali chirped; the black, restless bees buzzed here and there; gorgeous-winged butterflies fluttered lazily in the sunlight; but beyond and beside these, there seemed no other sign of life or motion anywhere.

Suddenly a figure appeared; it flitted like a shadow through the wide, open porch, and moved across the courtyard. It was a small, childish figure, clad only in

some loose, white linen garment—the figure of a little lad with a pale, wistful face, and dark, pathetic eyes, that looked out from an auburn tangle of locks.

Closely following him came another figure—dark, stern, and sombre—the figure of a priest. He laid his hand on the boy's head.

"I will return an hour after sunset," he said; "keep up a good heart. Even if it is Heaven's will to take thy grandfather, thou hast a home and friends left. The Church will be thy parent."

Something like a mutinous flash shot from the little lad's dark eyes. He moved his head restlessly aside from the hand that rested on it.

"Do you think my grandfather will die?" he asked wonderingly; "die like old Carlo, and Antonio?"

"I fear so," answered the priest. "The fever has him hard and sure. Besides, he is old, and he lacks strength to do battle with this insidious foe. You are not frightened to remain here, are you? If so, I will take you with me now."

The little lad shrank away.

"No—oh no," he said quickly; "I am not frightened, Padre Paolo, and I could not leave my grandfather."

"Very well, I will return as I told you. Keep up a good heart, and remember the Holy Mother is with thee. Thou hast naught to fear."

The old gate swung back on its hinges. The child went back over the hot stones, with the sunrays beating on his uncovered

head, and throwing into stronger relief the beautiful profile that was like a cameo.

He was a lovely little fellow, but fragile of form, and with a face too pale and wistful for his years.

"If he dies!" he said half aloud, and then went swiftly up the broad, bare stairs, and entered a room that was spacious indeed, but dreary, and comfortless, and given over to the same decay and neglect that spoke everywhere of the ruined fortunes of an ancient race—a race whose only representatives now were an old, dying man, and his little ten-year-old grandchild.

This child it was who crept up now to the bed, with its tarnished hangings of moth-eaten tapestry, and looked with sad and wondering eyes at the silent figure lying there.

"Grandfather," he said timidly.

There was no response. A bare brown hand moved restlessly on the coverlet—that was all.

The child bent closer to the dying man.

"Grandfather," he said, "can't you speak—can't you say if I am to go to the priest's? I don't want to go, grandfather. I would rather you took me with you."

The grey, lined face quivered with momentary emotion. The lips parted.

"Do not be a priest," they muttered. "You are the last of us—we were great once."

"And I will be great, too!" cried the boy eagerly. "You will know, grandfather, even there in Paradise—will you not?—and you will tell my mother, and say I have thought of her so often; and I will remember all your stories about her, and try to do what is right and brave, just as she would have wished me. But, oh, dear grandfather, must you go? I shall be so lonely!"

The old man did not answer. He was too exhausted for speech. He was dying of the cruel fever that had come with the summer, devastating households of rich and poor—the outcome of the marshes and undrained lands of the wide Campagna. Death had been about his own household for many weeks. Only one old serving-woman and the child had escaped from the scourge, and his own moments were numbered; and he knew it.

Slowly the time crept on, but the silence in that old, dark chamber was unbroken save for the faint breathing of the dying man, or a sob from the patient little watcher, who was growing frightened at his own loneliness.

Suddenly the stillness was broken by the sound of bells. The old man opened his dim eyes and met the child's anxious gaze. The little lad crept closer, and put his small, thin arms about the aged neck, and whispered tender words. But they won no response. There swept a strange grey shadow over the face—a darkness, as of night, fell over sight and sense. The ringing of the bells lost all sound, and the child's soft arms clasped only the coldness of clay.

Terrified, he started up and looked at the changed face—changed even in this brief time to something awful, and unreal, and full of dread.

"Grandfather, are you dead? Have you left me?" moaned the little lad, and gazed and listened for the response which would never come.

He clambered off the bed. A vague terror was upon him, but a strong resolution rooted itself in his childish brain, and nerved him to action.

"If I wait here, the priest will return and will take me," he said to himself. "I must run away from him. No one must know—not even Maruccia."

He went into an adjoining room and took a wide, old-fashioned hat of Tuscan straw from a peg, and a little cloak that old Maruccia had made for him, and then he paused.

He was young and ignorant; he was about to face the world in some fantastic and irrational fashion, such as he had read of in old romances. He had not a friend, or acquaintance, or relative, and he was running away in terror of that dark power, which only meant for him loss of freedom and unending penance.

He crept softly back into the dead man's room, and then knelt and prayed to the Madonna which hung above the bed, and bade her tell the old man what he had done, and beg him not to be angry. Then he looked for the last time at the old patient face and the closed eyes, and a sob rose in his throat as he kissed the withered, dead hands.

Then he took the old man's scantily-filled purse, and put on his hat and threw the little cloak over his shoulder, and so noiselessly and shadow-like, flitted from the room and from the presence of the sick friend he had on earth.

Coming out from the cool, dark loggia the bright sunshine almost blinded him. He passed into the tangled wilderness.

gardens, and thence, by a way he knew and through an aperture of the broken walls, on to the burnt and sloping hillside, from which he could see Rome.

At sunset the priest would return. Before then he must be far away.

He had some vague idea of going to the old and wonderful city, which had always had for him a sort of awe; which, near as it looked, he had never entered; and where, in his childish credulity, he fancied the great St. Peter dwelt, sitting on a throne of gold beneath that magic dome at which his young eyes had so often gazed.

In Rome it would be so easy to hide. A little thing like himself might easily be lost in that great place, amidst those crowded thoroughfares of which Maruccia had told him a hundred times. So he set out with resolute heart and will, taking the most unfrequented ways, and hiding in bushes and thickets if he by any chance saw a peasant approaching, and, unseen by anyone, he reached the gates in the dusk of the night.

In the daytime of these summer months Rome is deserted almost as a graveyard, but when the dusk falls and a faint air sweeps up from the mountains, and a sense of coolness comes with the starlight, and the splash of falling water from many fountains is welcome as music to the ear, then the people begin to wander through the streets, and smoke and chatter, and eat and drink, and the wineshops and the cafés are full, and the wide squares are noisy with song and laughter.

The little lad had come here on impulse. He had not even imagined what manner of place it might be, and its magnificence, and its size, and its noisy streets bewildered and delighted him. He stopped at a stall and bought some fruit, and asked for a draught of water, and the woman stared curiously at his delicate beauty, and at the broad piece of silver money he handed her in payment. But there are many beautiful children in Rome, and his dress was simple and almost coarse; so she did not ask him any questions, and the child himself was too absorbed to remark her curious gaze, though he bade her "*buona notte*" with a courtesy and grace that were inherent, and had been carefully trained by his grandfather, the dead Count di Falconieri.

Then, refreshed and rested, he wandered on, the new delicious sense of liberty and unrestraint thrilling every nerve and fibre of his frame, and completely banishing all other thoughts.

Presently he came to narrower and darker thoroughfares, ill-lit and unsavoury—the poorer quarter of the city. These places frightened him. The strange dark faces of men and women, the cries and wails of the children, the closeness, the dirt, and noisome smells appalled and sickened his senses.

He hurried on, moved by a vague fear, and came at last to a great open space strewn with fallen pillars and huge blocks of marble and of stone, and amidst them he saw a lofty column, on which the moonlight fell in a white flood. There was intense silence everywhere.

Behind the great column stood a pile of buildings, all marble and sculpture, and approached by a steep and massive stairway, and in the wide, open space a silent figure reined in a silent steed, and gazed in solemn watchfulness over a city that had once held him dear, and still gave him honour, and worship, and remembrance.

The little lad knew where he was now. The history of the Capitol was no new thing to him, and his heart beat wildly and excitedly as he trod the memorable ways and went past the Dioscuri, and knelt in a very ecstasy of delight at the feet of the bronze Aurelius, who was dear to him as a hero and sacred as a saint.

"If I could be great—if I, too, could do something for Rome!" he murmured, and looked up with dim, wet eyes to the calm face, sublime even in the frozen silence that genius had given to it.

He had spoken aloud, and as his words ceased a figure stole out from the background of buildings and courts, and stood looking down at the little childish figure with something between wonder and amusement.

"To whom do you speak, and why are you here alone at this hour?" asked a voice roughly.

The child started and sprang to his feet. He could find no answer, so he only looked up at the rough face and coarse-clad form in an alarm that the piercing eyes of his interlocutor were not slow to discover.

"Why are you here?" he asked again, and pulled the little figure forward into the clear moonrays. "It is close on midnight. Birds so young should be in their own nests ere this."

The child hung his head.

"I have no home," he said simply.

"No home!"

The man looked at the delicate beauty of the young face, at the tangle of curls, at

the slender grace of the little figure. No peasant's child this, it was clear to see; but how came it that he was friendless and homeless, and alone in a great city at midnight?

"Where do you come from—tell me your story," he said. "And speak truth," he added as he saw that the little lad hesitated. "I could hand you over to the carabinieri as a vagrant, you know."

The child did not know, but that made little difference. He lifted his head with a certain proud grace that even fear could not rob.

"I always speak truth. I told you I had no home. My grandfather is dead, and I have come from beyond Spada. I wanted to see Rome."

"To see Rome!" echoed his questioner. "But what are you going to do? How do you mean to live? You want food and shelter, do you not?"

"Yes," said the boy timidly. "But when I am tired I will ask for them. I have money with me."

"Oh," said the man, and his eyes sparkled ominously under their shaggy brows; "you have money! That is well. You had best come with me. I know a good woman who will give you a bed for the night. You can't wander about the streets any longer. Besides, the night-dews are bad. You will be catching the fever."

"I am not afraid," said the little fellow, "and I do not wish to come with you."

"Oh, nonsense!" said the man pacifically. "You must have someone to look after you. If the police catch you, you will be put into prison. I will do you no harm. And I have a nice home yonder," nodding his head in the direction of the Marcellus Theatre; "a nice home, and two wonderful dogs that dance. Would you not like to see them?"

"Yes," said the little fellow; "I would like that. You won't harm me?" he questioned doubtfully.

"Harm you—the saints forbid!" cried the man. "You shall have a merry time, and do just what pleases you."

"I will pay you, of course," said the little lad; "and perhaps you can tell me how to make a living, and earn some money."

"Doubtless I will," said the man, as he took the child's hand and led him down the broad, steep stairway. "You will get on famously. And now tell me why you are running away. Had you no one—no

relative—did not the priests offer you shelter?"

"Yes," said the child, growing very pale. "But I don't like the priests, and I could not bear to be shut up as they wished."

"Chee—e!" said the man softly, "so that is why you ran away. But you should not have come to Rome; it is full of them. Your own padre has many friends here, no doubt, and they would soon send you back once they knew who you were, my little illustrissimo. What is your name?"

"Baptista di Falconieri. Oh, please do not let the priests know!" he cried out in sudden terror. "I would rather die than go to them."

"Well, I am not over-fond of the gentry myself," said his companion with a harsh laugh; "so you need not fear I shall betray you. And if you will let me cut off those yellow curls and stain that white skin of yours, no one will recognise you at all, and you may wander at your will through Rome. But we will talk of that to-morrow. Come in here with me a moment."

He entered a tavern as he spoke—a low, dark place, and full of rough and evil-looking men, some of whom addressed him by name.

He ordered some wine, and made the child drink some also. The little fellow was thirsty and faint, and drank it off as he was told. But when he had swallowed it he felt sick and giddy, and the lights, and shadows, and dark figures, and flashing eyes of the men seemed whirling about him in an odd, confused way. He had some faint remembrance of clutching at a bench as he felt himself sliding down on to the floor. Then his eyes closed, and a stupor, deeper than sleep, stole over him.

## CHAPTER II.

WHEN Tista awoke he was in a little dark room, lying on a straw pallet, and stretched beside him was some dark, hairy creature, that growled ominously as the little lad moved. For a moment fear seized him, and his memory struggled to account for so strange a situation. But soon he remembered, and as his eyes grew accustomed to the gloom, he saw the figure of a man lying on another pallet some little distance off. It was his acquaintance of the night before. He was, to all appearance, sound asleep; so the child turned his eyes to the dog and spoke softly to him, and stretched out a little hand to pat his

He was not a very large dog, nor had he any sort of beauty, except in his big, soft eyes. His coat was rough and shaggy, and he had a dusty, ill-kempt look; but the child's soft touch and caressing voice seemed to please him, and he ceased to growl, and presently sat bolt upright, and stretched out a friendly paw. The little lad was delighted, and for long the two sat there in friendly fashion, till at last the sleeper in the corner awoke and looked round.

He ordered the child to rise, and Tista did so, looking in vain for ewer, or pitcher, or anything needful for the performance of his toilet. The man laughed roughly at his timid request for water, and bade him go downstairs to ask the padrona. So he undid the wooden bar of the door and went down the rickety staircase, the dog following.

The bright golden sunlight was everywhere without, and even the dingy, dirty court shared in its warmth and brilliance. The boy saw a little stream of water bubbling from the lips of a broken Medusa into a big earthen pan. He went up, and plunged his head and face into it joyfully, and then noticed for the first time that all his curls were gone. The man must have cut them off while he slept. His hands, too, he noticed, were brown, as if dyed, and though he could not see his face, he felt sure that had shared a similar fate.

Presently the man came down also, and bade him get his hat and cloak, for they must be off. He had a bundle slung on his own back, and seemed hurried and anxious. The woman began to question him about the little lad; and it was as well, perhaps, that Tista could not hear the story he narrated. As it was, the child was in sad grief, for nowhere could he find his money. He searched his little pockets again and again, but all in vain, and at last went weeping down the stairs to declare his loss. At the very first word, the man stopped him roughly.

"I have taken it," he said. "Some I had to pay a man who has already tracked you, and some I have paid for your lodging and food. The rest I will take care of and lay out as seems best. A child like you knows nothing of the value of money. It is safe with me."

The little lad did not answer.

The idea of the priest being on his track already, struck him with terror; and when the man suggested that they should leave Rome that very day, and so put the

danger behind them, he agreed only too readily.

So, early as it was, they went out of the city, and the little lad thought sadly of his dreams, and watched the great cross against the violet sky with tearful eyes, and wondered if St. Peter knew of his troubles, and wished it had been possible to enter the great church and tell him of them, only he was so afraid of the priests.

At mid-day they rested at a little village. In the cool of the evening they resumed their way, and finally reached a town, whose name the child could not catch, but from whence the man told him they would take the railway and travel all night.

Fatigue had worn him out, and even the novelty of that iron road could not arouse him. He lay on the hard seat and slept till it was fully daylight, and then awakened, stiff and sore, to find they were at a large station, and he hustled roughly out of the carriage by the man Bruno.

"What place is this?" asked the little lad timidly, and stared about him in the flood of sunlight, and saw hurrying crowds, and waiting horses, and hotel carriages, with a sense of awe and wonder.

"It is Firenze," muttered the man, and flung his bundle across his shoulder, and went to fetch his dog Cocco from the van, where he lay muzzled and panting, half suffocated by the care of police regulations.

Then, holding Tista's hand, and followed by Cocco, he went swiftly along through squares and courts, finally crossing a river, which looked a mere yellow thread, and which Tista afterwards learnt was the Arno, and so through dusky, irregular streets, with arcades, and shops of goldsmiths and mosaic-sellers, and flower-stalls heaped up with rare and fragrant blossoms, and amongst many throngs of people, chatting, and laughing, and jesting, and moving on to some Church festival, until, in bewilderment, he found himself at last in a homely little hostelry, where Bruno seemed well known, and where he ordered breakfast.

The meal over, Bruno called the lad to his side.

"Listen," he said. "You have cast your fate in with mine now. You must do your best, therefore, to earn your bread as Cocco does. There were two of them; but Cecco, who was the cleverest, died in Rome that night I found you. Now, you told me you could sing. Is it true?"

"Yes," he said timidly, for the man's fierce eyes and voice frightened him. "I



used to sing the masses in the little chapel for Padre Paolo, and in the processions on saints' days.

"But do you know nothing else? Nothing that would please the people?"

The little fellow shook his head.

"But I could learn," he said quickly.

"And you will have to learn, and that soon," said Bruno roughly. "The money won't last long. I have spent most of it in bringing you here, safe out of your priest's clutches. And they would not know you now, with your short hair and your dark skin. I have done all this, and you must pay me back with such service as you can."

"I will do my best," said the little fellow meekly. "Am I to sing in the streets?"

"Of course. Where else?" said the man with a stare of surprise. "We will begin at once. There are plenty of people about, and some of the streets are cool even in this September heat."

They went out, the dog following. It was a new and strange experience for Tista. He wondered if his grandfather knew, or what old Maruccia would say—she who had told him so many tales of his great race, and their noble deeds. They passed through narrow, twisting ways, and under the dome of the Santo Spirito, and beyond the frowning darkness of the Pitti, and presently emerged into a wide square, where rose the battlements of a majestic palace, where great shapes of marble and bronze seemed keeping watch and guard, and where, in and amidst the niches, and in the cool shade of the great gallery, were ranged little stalls and booths, all bright with coloured stuffs, and piles of fruit and flowers. The people were pouring out from the Duomo, and the San Michele, and the Santa Croce, all on good terms with the world and themselves, seeing that they had just made their peace with Heaven.

Bruno stationed himself in a cool corner of the great square, and Tista, looking wonderingly at the strange new city, stood by him as in a dream.

The sound of Bruno's flute aroused him. At the first notes Coco stood up on his hind-legs, then he began to dance, and soon a crowd collected round, and scores of voices chattered, and laughed, and eulogised the performance. That finished, Bruno turned to the little lad.

"Sing," he said. "Sing anything you know."

And while Tista obeyed, Bruno went round, hat in hand, and, with persuasive voice and smile, begged for the coins that were very willingly given.

Tista sang, and the people grew silent and listened to the soft, clear, pathetic notes with wondering ears.

He was only a little, roughly-clothed lad, with short, crisp hair clustered over his brow, and looking strangely bright against the false darkness of his face; but something in the upraised eyes and thrilling notes went straight to their hearts, and, as he ceased, they clapped, and shouted, and threw flowers and coins at his feet in their impulsive Southern fashion.

"Go on!" they cried; "go on!" And the little lad obeyed, growing bolder and more at ease, and inspired by his own success, the sweet, clear treble pealing out in the silence till it seemed to go straight up to heaven, like a lark's song on a summer morning.

Bruno listened wonderingly, and not ill pleased. The child took better than the dancing dogs. He was not afraid now of his bargain. He gathered up the money, which the child left unheeded, but he would not let him sing again.

"No," he said, as the shouts and acclamations rang out on all sides. "That is enough here. Let us go farther on. You did well," he added, as he held his hand and led him across the Piazza of the Signoria, and on to where the chequered marbles of the Duomo, and the slender pile of Giotto's tower, showed themselves against the soft blue of the sky. "You did well, but you must learn the people's songs; that is what they like. Keep your ears open and listen. One hears them everywhere. You will soon pick them up. We will go home now, and rest, and have some food, and in the evening we will go yonder to the Cascine Woods. All the city will be there. You will have a merry life with me if you but do my bidding. There is no fear of the priests catching you now."

Tista thought Bruno could not be a very good Catholic himself to talk so irreverently of the Church's powers and mandates; but he was only too well content to be free to roam through these wonderful and beautiful cities, at no greater cost than the lifting up of his voice in song, that came as naturally to him as to the birds.

Obedient to Bruno's demands, he sang again and again. The people crowded

and applauded, and Bruno was in high good-humour, and congratulated himself upon his luck, and no longer spoke roughly to the little lad, but treated him with good food and kind words, and let him rest and sleep all through the hot, bright afternoon, for it was a long way to the Cascine Woods.

"This boy's voice is a mine of silver," Bruno said to himself that night; "a mine of silver! I must take care, though, that he does not find it out."

### CHAPTER III.

THIS first day was the outline of Tista's life for many a day to come. They wandered through towns and villages, large and small, taking them just as they came; and always the little lad's lovely voice and beautiful face carried the same charm, and won the same success.

All through the broad, sunny plains of Romagna and Tuscany they wandered, and almost always on foot, travelling in the cool early mornings or bright nights of moonlight, Tista singing to knots of dancing peasants, or at the doors of little hostleries, or in the cool squares or gardens of some ancient town; and the little lad grew to like the wandering life, though he disliked his master, and his rough, coarse ways and violent speech. But, so long as the money flowed in, Bruno was not unkind, though he hated the little lad's fanciful dreams and constant thirst for information, and scoffed at and checked them whenever Tista uttered them. So Tista gradually kept them to himself, or only confided them to Coco, who was his surest and most faithful friend.

The animal had grown very fond of him, and rarely left his side, and went with him in all his wanderings, even though he were footsore and tired, as he often was; for rest to him meant only exercises and practices, or the learning of new tricks, to the accompaniment of heavy blows and hard words; Bruno, with the intelligence of ignorance, seeming to think that the surest way to quicken comprehension in the brute creation is by ill-usage. Tista knew better, and would do the teaching with endless patience and untiring gentleness, trying thus to shield the dumb creature from his master's blows, and often succeeding.

People soon knew them well—the little bright-haired lad, and the shaggy dog who was his inseparable companion through the summer months.

When the vintage was over, and the dawns and nights began to grow chill, Bruno turned from the mountains, and talked of spending the winter months in Florence.

"There will be rich foreigners there," he said, "and money is easy to make. Besides, there is the Carnival time coming."

So, to Tista's delight, they travelled back to the beautiful city, pausing on their way at Fiesole, which they had not yet visited.

They reached it at dusk of a November day, and Bruno bade the child rest for that night—a permission he was willing enough to accept. Very early in the morning he awoke and dressed himself, called softly to Coco, and went out into the cool, radiant dawn while Bruno slept. He went up the steep slopes, and watched the soft grey mists as they slowly rolled away like furled sails before the advance of the dawn. The vineyards were bare; all the shelving, zigzag ways looked strange and deserted; and the old brown monastery stood between the olives and the pale grey mists, solemn and quiet as a memory of the dead.

While Tista lingered there, there came up the steep, rugged path a little, slender, dainty figure, holding the hand of a tall and somewhat stern-faced man—a foreigner, so Tista said to himself, knowing that that fair skin and hair, and cold, proud demeanour, had no soft or subtle element of his own land in it.

The child was talking merrily and gaily. She seemed to have no fear of that proud, cold man, whose glance swept over the little lad with supreme indifference. But the little girl pulled him by the hand, and said something, and they both paused and looked from him to Coco. Then the stranger spoke.

"My little girl tells me that is a dancing-dog. She has seen him perform. Is that so?"

"Si, signor," said Tista in his pure sonorous Roman, that made the Englishman's Italian seem a harsh and foreign tongue.

"Will you make him dance for her?" resumed the gentleman, tossing a coin at his feet.

At any other time, to any other bidding, it would have seemed a natural thing to Tista to obey. But, strange to say, this insolent coolness, this calmly-asserted authority, awoke in him an instinct

of rebellion, and with a pride which seemed to amuse the stranger not a little, he took up the money, and held it out.

"I am not his master," he said. "Even if I were, I should bid the signorina wait till he dances for the people. It is hard enough work. He must not begin too early."

He had thrust the coin back into the Englishman's hand, raised his tattered hat, and walked away ere the child or her father had half comprehended the rapid speech and action. The man laughed, but the little girl loosed her hand, and ran swiftly after the boy.

"Do not be angry," she said in pretty broken patois. "My father did not mean to be cruel. That is a beautiful dog, and so clever. I have seen you often. You sing, do you not?"

"Yes," said Tista, somewhat abashed by her beauty and radiance, and beginning to feel ashamed of his childish conduct. But was he not a Falconieri, and had they not treated him as a beggar? He forgot that to all outward appearance he was only a little, ragged peasant-lad—forgot it till the beauty, and the pretty toilette, and shining hair of this foreign child struck on him with a sudden sense of wonder, and brought a burning blush to his cheek.

"Do you live here?" pursued the child in Italian, which she had picked up from her nurse during a two years' sojourn in the land.

"No," said Tista; "I live nowhere."

"Nowhere! Do you mean you have no home—no parents? I thought that dark man was your father."

"Bruno my father!" and the little lad raised his head with a proud grace. "Oh no, signorina; I come of a great race, though I am homeless and friendless as I said. But I mean to be great one day—even as they were in years gone by."

The child looked at him in wonder.

"Are they all dead?" she asked. "Your people, I mean?"

"Yes," he said, and bent his head sorrowfully. "I am the last."

"And why do you go about with this man?" she questioned. "Do you like it?"

"I did not at first," he answered. "But there was nothing else to do. I must earn my bread, and I can only sing."

He spoke simply, and yet his words told so much—quite enough to thrill the child's tender heart with pity. Her eyes looked at him with the sweetest compassion that ever he had seen in human eyes.

"My father shall help you," she said. "He is rich and great. Come and tell him your story."

But Tista shrank away.

"No," he said; "I don't want charity. What I can do I will do—for myself. That is always best. Others have done it. This land is full of their histories. I can do the same."

The Englishman, meanwhile, had grown impatient, and now called loudly to the little girl. She turned away reluctantly.

"I shall see you again," she said, "in Florence. Do you go there soon?"

"To-day, I think," he answered; "and Bruno says we will stay there all the winter."

"So do we," said the child in perfect good faith, and seeming to have no doubt as to the fact of such a meeting or its results. "So do we. I shall look out for you when you sing. I wonder you do not sing at the church festas, though. There are so many little boys, but they have not voices like you."

"I like my freedom," said Tista with a smile, and again took off his hat as she nodded and kissed her little hand before responding to her father's summons.

Then she ran away, and Tista put his arm round Coco's neck, and wandered off under the boughs of the walnut-trees.

He thought of his old home among the Roman hills, where the bats and the owls flitted through the ivy, and an old blind woman sat lonely by her stove, listening for a footstep that might never echo through those desolate rooms while she had life to be glad at the sound.

"Poor Maruccia!" he murmured; "poor old blind Maruccia! Perhaps I ought not to have left her, after all!"

#### CHAPTER IV.

THE winter days crept on, cold and dark, save for some brief noon-hours of sunshine, and cold winds swept down from the Alps, and snowstorms drove down the valley, and Tista shivered in his fireless garret, and trembled at the sound of Bruno's step, for now there were only blows and curses for his portion.

Luck had deserted them. The little lad had caught a severe chill, and his pretty voice had gone, and they were miserably poor, with a poverty that had nothing poetic or picturesque about it. He lay on his hard pallet day after day, fevered and chilled alternately, and no one came near

him or troubled about him save Coco, who would stand and look at him with his soft, pathetic eyes, or give him the warmth of his rough body and shaggy coat when he was seized with those terrible shiverings.

One day, as Tista lay there, weak, and ill, and very miserable, the dog burst into the room, and leaped upon the bed in great excitement. He had something white fastened to his collar, and almost hidden by his long hair.

Tista took it out. It was a little note. It was addressed, in a scrawling, unformed hand, "To the Little Singer."

He tore it open wonderingly.

It said:

"I am writing this because I never see you with the dog. Are you ill? My nurse tells me the Italian. I hope it is right. I hope the dog will bring you this. We are living on the Lung' Arno. I have told my father about you. He would like to speak with you. I wish you would come and see us. I do not like the man, so I give this to the dog. If you are not ill, walk out to St. Croce on Sunday. I go to the service with Nita—that is my nurse. I will be there at first mass.—Your friend,  
"LELIA ROCHFORD."

He read this again and again, and the tears of weakness stood in his eyes and ran down his cheeks. It touched him to the heart that this beautiful little English lady should remember him so faithfully.

"I must go," he said to himself as he thrust the note into the breast of his little ragged shirt. "If I am ever so ill, I must go."

He knew where the great church stood. It was a long distance from their lodging-place, but on that morning he rose at the first streak of daylight and dressed himself—weak, and sick, and trembling as he was.

He put on his little cloak—his only warm garment—and then stole softly out of the garret, and down the narrow, broken stairs, and let himself out into the streets. He was so weak that he staggered, and the sunshine seemed swimming in rings of light around him. But he struggled bravely on through the cold, deserted thoroughfare. He felt that he must see his child-friend again.

He reached the church at last. Its dark, solemn porch stood open, like a grave. Within, lights gleamed on the high altar, and the voices of the priests, who were saying mass, echoed dully under

the great vaulted roof. He staggered forward and sat down on a chair. It was all very dark and cold, and the lights seemed a long way off, and the great tomb of Dante loomed like a ponderous shadow from under the marble walls.

Presently a hand touched him, a voice whispered in his ear:

"So you have come! I am glad. But tell me, have you been ill?"

He looked up. He saw the pretty figure, and sunny face, and golden head of his little English friend.

"I have been ill—yes," he answered almost stupidly. "But I thought I must come, since you asked me."

"Nita is over there saying her prayers," said the child, nodding her head in the direction of one of the chapels. "We will sit here and talk—you and I. Papa does not know I have come."

"But is not that wrong to deceive him?" asked Tista, gazing still in rapt admiration at her as she seated herself on one of the rush-bottomed chairs behind the shelter of a great pillar.

"If I had told him, he might not have let me come," said the little lady wisely. "If I tell him afterwards he cannot help it. Did you always tell your father everything?"

"I do not remember my father at all," said Tista sadly, "or my mother either. Only my grandfather, and he died of the fever this summer that has gone."

"And why did you run away?" asked the child anxiously.

Tista hung his head.

"Sometimes I think it was foolish," he said. "But the priests wanted me to enter their order, and I did not wish to become one of them, and I thought they would force me, and so I ran away."

"Did no one know?"

"No; the two old servants had died within that week. The fever was everywhere—they said it was a scourge. There was only Maruccia left, and I. But I know the priests will be good to her, and perhaps some day I shall be rich and able to go back, and I need not fear the priests any more, but can build up the old broken walls, and restore the rooms that are all deserted now, and try to be happy as my people were, hundreds of years ago."

Oh, beautiful faith of childhood, to which nothing seems impossible! The little sickly, half-starved lad, with not a copper coin in his possession, talked of

being rich, and great, and famous, as though such things were the easiest possible of achievement!

"But," said the little girl presently, "if you have to wait so long, Maruccia may be dead too. You said she was very old."

"True," said Tista sadly. "I forgot that."

"I am going to Rome soon," said the little girl, "for the Carnival. Papa says it is better there. I will make him take me to your house, and if I see Maruccia I will tell her that I have met you, and that you are with that cruel man. I am sure he is cruel, I saw him beat the dog; and you—you look so ill and thin, and your clothes are all ragged. Does he beat you too? I wish you would run away from him and come with us."

"No," said Tista, flushing hotly; "I cannot do that. And you must not tell Maruccia what will make her sad, for that is cruel and can do no good. If you see her you must say I am well and happy, for indeed, signorina, I am. One cannot help being poor, but as long as one is honest, and does what is best, and has the beautiful earth to look at, and the good God to love one, it is not hard to be happy."

The little girl looked at him earnestly.

"You are easily pleased," she said. "But, all the same, I wish you would come. I have no brother or sister—only my father. I should like to have you to talk to and play with. But see—there is Nita coming. She has said her prayers. You will walk back with us, will you not?"

Tista looked at his ragged clothes, and his old worn shoes, and coloured faintly.

"I think not," he said. "Your father would not like it. I am only a little street-singer, you know, to him."

"Yes," said the child. "He does not believe me; he laughed when I said you were a Falconieri, and that your people were once Counts of Falconieri. He said all Italians were nobles if one took their word for it. But I will take him to your home when we are in Rome, and then, perhaps, he will believe me."

"The signorina is always troubling herself about other people," whispered the woman, who had heard that last speech. "She wants to make the whole world rich and happy, I think, like herself. Come," she went on, turning to the child, "it is time we went home. Il signore papa will miss you, and I shall get scolded."

"Good-bye, then," said the little girl to

Tista. "I shall not forget you, and I will tell Maruccia what you said."

She put her little face up to his, and Tista, colouring shyly, stooped and kissed it. Then she went away down the great church aisle, and he cowered down, trembling, and faint, and sick at heart, feeling for the first time that a life without human sympathy or human love is but a cold and empty thing.

After a time youth and health reasserted themselves. The chill and fever left Tista, though the cough that followed was almost as hard to bear, and tore his slender little frame to pieces. But he was able to creep about once more, and to wander through the sunny streets with Coco, and even to sing his little songs that were strung to the tunes of the people, and familiar to them as household words, and never failed to please because of that very familiarity.

One day Bruno said to him:

"Come, make a good meal, and try to look your best. This is the first day of Carnival. There is money to be made in plenty."

So Tista ate and drank the homely fare, and Bruno twisted a scarlet woollen sash round his waist, and fastened his little cloak in picturesque fashion to one shoulder, and let all his rich gold curls tumble as they would about his face, which was no longer stained and brown, and so, with Coco at their heels, they went out into the many-hued, changing swarm of human life, that reeled, and danced, and shouted, and sang amidst the squares, and streets, and prisons, and palaces of the City of Flowers.

#### CHAPTER V.

THE people seemed to have all gone mad.

Maskers whirled to and fro—the squeaks and pranks of Pulcinello drew crowds of laughing followers. The balconies were draped in gay colours—the windows filled with eager faces; the dusky streets a medley of glowing hues, a tumult of voices. Under a deep porch they halted—Bruno, and Tista, and the dog—and looked at it all.

There came a lull presently, and Bruno struck some chords on his mandoline. A few people, unoccupied and willing to be amused, turned in the direction of the music, and caught sight of the picturesque little figure with its scarlet sash, and face

framed in loose gold curls, and they drew near and listened, as Tista threw back his head and sang one of the songs of Tuscany.

The notes were less powerful, but not less sweet than of yore. The noise around grew hushed, in a little while a circle had formed, and as the song ceased they called for others, and yet others, and tossed their coins into Bruno's hat, and some remembering, cried out, "It is the little song-bird of last summer!" and laughed and applauded with eager delight, as Tista gave them the song they had first heard from him—the solemn, beautiful air he had been used to sing at the festivals of his own chapel among the far-off hills of Rome.

But he was still weak, and the exertion of singing and the deafening tumult of the crowds made him faint. Timidly he spoke to Bruno, lifting a little white face and trembling lips to his taskmaster.

"If I might have a little food and rest," he said, "I could sing better then."

Bruno grumbled and swore, but he saw the boy needed what he asked for, and took him into a little wineshop, and asked for a flask of Chianti and some bread.

"That was a good haul," he said presently, counting over the coins in his pockets. "The people are foolish just now. A little thing sways them. They like your songs; you must sing again."

"Oh yes," said Tista readily, as he broke off some bread for Coco. "I will always sing when I can."

He was pleased to see Bruno in good humour. It was not usual. As he raised his head from stooping over the dog he glanced up at his taskmaster's face. To his amazement it had turned livid, and a great terror seemed to leap into his eyes. They were fixed upon the face of a man just entering the doorway—a stalwart man in the dress of a peasant. Bruno clutched the little lad's hand.

"Come away!" he whispered hoarsely, and drew his hat over his brows, and tried to slink out unobserved.

But in a second's space a great cry rent the air, and a strong form hurled itself upon him.

"Ah, robber—thief—brute!" screamed the peasant. "So I have found you at last! Where is my child? Give me back my child that you stole that summer-time. Give her back—do you hear!—or by all the saints your blood shall pay for her!"

His hands were on Bruno's throat

with a vice-like grip. His face was savage and purple, and his eyes seemed starting from their sockets.

Tista crept into a corner in terror. A crowd gathered round the two men, staring at them, but not interfering.

"He stole my child. It is two summers back," cried the man. "He took her away from me—my little Marietta; she was but four years old. What has he done with her? Let him tell me, or I will have his blood. We men of the Lastra know how to take our vengeance, and I have sworn to the Madonna that I will have mine."

"I know nothing of your child," muttered Bruno chokingly, as he strove to wrest himself from that fierce clutch; "nothing. I have never been to the Lastra in my life."

"Liar!" thundered the accuser, dashing Bruno's head furiously against the brick wall of the inn. "Have I not seen you with these eyes a dozen times? Did I not catch you speaking to the child that day of the Corpus Christi? And the neighbours know that you gave her toys, and sweetmeats, and fair words. I know you well enough. Tell me where she is!"

"You will kill him," murmured a bystander, but Tista, trembling and looking on from his dark corner, saw that Bruno's hand had found its way to his belt, and in another second there was a gleam of something bright, a flash, a cry—and the peasant staggered back with the blood gushing hot and swift from his side.

Bruno did not waste a second. As the grip at his throat relaxed, he sprang forward to the doorway. He had forgotten all about Tista, but even as he reached it his progress was arrested. The noise had penetrated to the streets.

There came a cry of "The guard! The guard!" and Bruno reeled back into the shop, dark and sullen, his teeth set like a mastiff's at bay, the dripping knife still clasped in his strong right hand, and all his fierce, wild soul aroused, and in revolt even against the arm of justice.

"It was in self-defence," he muttered. "He tried to kill me. He is a mad-man!"

They seized him, and held him apart, and over all the place there came a great silence, broken only by the faint words of a dying man:

"He stole my child—it can be proved. I am of the Lastra. I have sought him these two years. When I accused him—

he stabbed me. Oh, my child—my child! Shall I meet your white soul?"

The words ceased. His head fell back. He was dead.

Tista and Coco had crept quietly out under cover of the noise and confusion, and the little Roman lad wandered through the streets, friendless, penniless, and sick at heart, with the dog by his side.

He had not a coin in the world. Night came on, but he could not summon courage to go to the wretched little den where they had lodged. He was too heart-sick and miserable to sing, yet he knew he must do something, if only to buy food for Coco.

The thought of the patient, faithful creature nerved him to make an exertion for which he felt little inclined. He made his way, therefore, back to the lighted thoroughfares, and stood in the streets among the giddy throngs, and again and again essayed to sing. But the noise and the riot were too great, and Bruno's towering form was not beside him to command attention, and the fickle people did not seem to heed the voice that ever and anon stole silver-sweet over their clamour, pleading to deaf ears and heedless hearts.

So, without being the richer for his exertions, Tista left the scene of revelry, and passed into a quiet, dusky street, and there sat down on the broken steps of a deserted house, and Coco crept close to him, as if to shield him from the wind that blew so sharp and keen; and the two fell asleep at last, unseen by any of the passers-by, to wake stiff, and frozen, and hungry, and wretched, in the chill grey dawn of another day.

In despair, Tista then took himself to the landlady who had been so kind to him when he was ill. She was poor enough—that he knew—and had many little mouths to feed, but he thought she might perhaps spare a crust or a bone for Coco—poor Coco! whose wistful eyes seemed to say he had tasted nothing since noon of the previous day.

The woman was bustling about. She was in a very ill temper. Bruno had owed her two weeks' rent, and now when she learnt from the child that he had been taken by the police, and was locked up in prison, she was furious.

In vain Tista begged her to give Coco a mouthful of food, or to keep him there till Bruno should be free.

"She had mouths enough to feed," she grumbled. "And what was she to do with a great hungry animal like that?"

"But he is so clever," pleaded Tista. "He will bring you in money. You know how many tricks he does."

"That is true," grumbled the woman's husband, who was eating a stew of garlic in the kitchen beyond, and had overheard the conversation. "He may bring us in a scudo or two. He may stay."

Tista left the place with a last kiss and a murmured farewell to Coco. The dog at least would have a home, and shelter, and food, he thought.

And so, with brave eyes, from which he held back the thronging tears, he once more went his way to do battle with the world.

#### CHAPTER VI.

AS he left the street where he and Bruno had lodged, Tista suddenly remembered the promise of the little English girl to write to him. So when the post-office was open, he went up to the little window and timidly asked for the expected letter.

The official went to pigeon-hole F. It seemed as if he was a long, long time sorting the various missives, but at last, to Tista's delight, he discovered one, and handed it to the little fellow. Only too well did he know that large, childish, irregular hand, and, hugging his treasure to his breast, he went out of the building and rushed to the first church he saw, and there, in a quiet corner, unseen and undisturbed, he gave himself up to its perusal.

"DEAR LITTLE COUNT," it said, "for Maruccia says you are a Count, it is all quite true, and my father believes you. She is here—Maruccia, I mean—and she sends you what is between these two pages." (Here Tista turned the pages, and found enclosed some pieces of paper-money.) "And you must leave Bruno and come back. She is always weeping for you. And the Padre Paolo is dead. He died of the fever, three days after you ran away. So do come back. My father has taken your villa—though indeed it is no villa at all—from the agent; so you will have the rent, for, of course, it is yours; and, now, why should you wander about any longer, when you can come and live with us in your own house, and no one will dare to touch you, for my father says they cannot make you a priest against your will! If



Bruno will not let you go, you must run away. And it is easy to come here by the railway, though it is a long journey. So buy yourself a ticket, and come at once, and when you get to Rome, go straight to the Hotel Quirinale, in the Via Nazionale, and ask for my father, and then, dear little Tista, you shall not have any more troubles or hard usage, for when my father says he will be your friend, he means it. Poor old Maruccia! she is always weeping and praying for you. She says it would have broken your father's heart to know that you sang for your bread.—Your little friend,

LELIA.

"P.S.—Perhaps you had better say nothing at all to Bruno, but just run away at once. I will watch for you every day, so will Maruccia."

As Tista finished the letter, his eyes were brimming over with tears of joy and gratitude.

How happy he felt—how happy! The sweet faint smell of the incense stole to his quiet nook, the little bell rang clear and silvery through the vast dim aisles. He waited till the service was over, and then crept out into the glad, bright sunshine, with neither dread nor fear in his heart now.

First of all he must get himself some food. He asked for the black coffee, and figs, and bread, which seemed to him the most delicious of meals, and as he ate, thought sadly of Coco, and wished he were there to profit by this change of fortune.

"Still, he is Bruno's dog—not mine, and I have no right to take him," he thought.

Then he gave his paper note, and counted himself rich as a prince when he saw the pile of coins handed him in exchange. He had no thought that other eyes might see it too, and did see it as he put the silver pieces into the old, worn purse that Bruno had allowed him to keep when he robbed him of his little fortune in Rome.

Crowds of people were rushing in and out of the station when he reached it, and he was pushed and hustled, and shouted at by the officials, until he grew bewildered. At last he managed to make his way to the office and asked for a ticket to Rome.

The man tossed it down, and shouted out the price. Tista thrust his hand into his pocket for his purse. It was gone.

He had been robbed in the press and crowd, either before he had reached the station, or while he had fought and battled with the press of people before the ticket-office. Robbed!

He muttered the word helplessly, but no one seemed to heed or hear. He felt stupefied. He crept up to one of the officials, and told him of his loss. The man only shrugged his shoulders. He would not even believe that he could have possessed such a sum as he declared. His rough words broke the spell of terror, and Tista turned away, and sadly retraced his steps.

"But I must get to Rome," he said to himself as he stood without the station. "Perhaps I can walk. No doubt it will take a long, long time; but it can be done."

He looked at his little stock of coppers. They would serve for food; he could live on so little—so very little.

The extent of his poverty did not appal him very much, for hope was still existent, and at the end of his journey there would be welcome, and safety, and joy.

So he went out at the Santa Croce Gate, and seeing an old lame beggar standing by the roadside, went up and asked him what road he should follow.

The beggar stared.

"Rome—well, that is the road—yonder—the old road which the diligenza used to take. No one goes by it now. There is the iron way, you know."

The child nodded.

"I have no money. I cannot go by that. I must walk."

"Walk!" echoed the man. "You cannot do it. A grown man would scarce have strength. You are foolish to think of it. Beg or work for the money, and take the iron way—it is your best plan."

But Tista only shook his head, and went on with fleet, light steps. He must get to Rome—that was the one thought in his mind.

"I shall reach it—in time," he told himself, and trudged boldly on by the bright waters of the Arno.

Every step he took was a step nearer. There was joy and comfort in the thought, and a little face seemed to beckon him, and old blind Maruccia seemed crying, "Come, before I too die!"

And so with resolute heart he went on, led by an instinct half mysterious, half divine, and irrational as only a child's and a dumb brute's instincts can be.

## CHAPTER VII.

TISTA walked on till nightfall. Then he reached a quiet little hamlet. At first he fancied it was deserted, the old, old houses were so dark and still, but he learnt that most of the people were at work all day in the fields, and were only now coming home. An old woman told him this, sitting at her door and plaiting straw with lean brown fingers. She brought him some milk, and dried figs, and a hunch of bread, and told him he might rest there for the night. She lived there with her son and his wife. They would be home soon to supper. They had two little children, who were in the fields with them.

"They were all very poor," she went on cheerily, "but the worst of the year was over now. The long, bright summer would soon come. Living was easier and cheaper then."

Tista sat there, leaning his chin on his hands, and feeling rested and at peace, while his eyes roamed over the pretty, quiet place, and on to the dark hills, where a convent-bell was sounding the Ave Maria.

Presently there came a sound of panting breath and swift feet, and a dark form leaped out of the gloom and fell at Tista's feet, spent and well-nigh exhausted.

The boy started up with an exclamation that brought the old woman to the door.

"It is Coco!" he cried. "He has come all this way; he has found me by himself. Oh, the brave, clever Coco!" And the tears streamed down his face as he flung his arms round the faithful creature's neck, and hugged him close and fast.

Coco whined and barked, and showed by every means in his power his delight at finding his little human friend, and when the old woman and her son, who had come up, heard the story, they brought him water and food, and Tista bathed his poor feet, that were dusty and bleeding with their long journey, and then the kindly people made them come in and share their frugal supper, and so for that night Tista had food and rest.

In the early morning he rose again, a little footsore, and with aching limbs, but still resolute to march onwards. But the woman's son told him a friend of his was going down to a town some leagues off with a cart of earthenware, and would take him so far on his journey, and save him the walk.

Tista looked ruefully at his few remaining coins, but the man bade him put them by and not dream of payment till he was asked for it. And so with tears and grateful words the little lad accepted the offer so kindly made, and with Coco on the straw by his side, set forward another stage on his journey south.

He travelled all day in the cart—sometimes walking beside with Coco to the music of the jingling bells, sometimes resting at ease on the straw beside the earthen pots and pans that the man sold in the little villages upon their way.

That night Tista reached Figline, and rested at a little inn where the man, Gio, put up his horse and cart. In gratitude for all the kindness they showed him the little lad put Coco through his tricks, and sitting there in the dusky light in the great arched doorway, he himself sang gaily and merrily all their favourite songs, and the people were delighted, and would have showered their scant coin upon him, only that he refused to take anything, knowing how poor they were, and how small and scant the savings of the winter must be.

"He has a heart too big for his body," the women said, touched deeply by his pretty face and prettier ways, and by his simple little story, and the resolution that was in him, small and frail as he looked.

Two days more went by.

On the fourth the weather changed. A cold wind swept over the mountain heights, and brought sudden showers of rain with it. Yet again fortune befriended him. A travelling artist, seeing him sheltering under a hedge with the dog by his side, spoke to him, and ended by making a sketch of the two.

It was a pretty picture, and the artist made it tell a very pathetic story. He painted it afterwards, and it brought him a fame that he had never imagined could be his.

Many people grew familiar with that little childish face with its big, uplifted eyes looking straight up to heaven, and the ragged shirt open over the thin little chest, and the dog sitting beside the small, forlorn figure, as pathetic in its faith and endurance as himself. The artist called it "His Only Friend." When he had completed the sketch, which he took while a brief gleam of sunshine parted the rain-clouds, he made the boy come with him to the nearest station, and took him and the dog as far as Orvieto, where he was staying.

Tista felt himself almost at his destination then; and the artist took him to his rooms in the Via del Durano, and feasted him right royally, for he saw the child was worn and exhausted with fatigue, nor would he let him go on his way till he had had twelve hours' rest.

Towards sunset they wandered out to see the old frescoes of St. Giovino. Tista sat himself down on a fragment of rock, while his friend explored the old basilica.

Suddenly he noticed that Coco started up, his hair bristling, his eyes fixed, and a low, angry growl escaping through his glistening teeth.

Tista was alarmed. Whispering to the dog to be silent, he led him a short distance away, and they concealed themselves behind some fallen rocks. Tista heard steps advancing, and looked out from his place of concealment. His face blanched with terror. Before him he saw Bruno.

Trembling in every limb, the little lad still had sense enough to keep the dog silent.

The man's clothes were torn, and bloody, and grimed with dust. His feet were bare, his whole aspect fierce and terrifying.

He had no idea of the child's proximity; he had, in fact, escaped from Florence, and was hiding in terror of his life; but Tista did not know this, and imagined that his old enemy was in pursuit of him.

Bruno looked about him for a few moments, then took the road over the hill to where the ancient tombs stood in solitary splendour that even centuries of war and change had not despoiled. As he disappeared the child's terror gave place to one supreme and irrational desire to escape.

He forgot his artist friend—he did not dare to venture near the town. Under shelter of the growing darkness he ran, fleet as a deer, down the steep hillside, and, the railway-line in view as a guide, he soon left the town far behind him. Coco followed close at his heels. He had evidently forsworn his old master entirely, and constituted himself guardian and friend of the little lad.

On through the gathering dusk the child sped in frantic haste. Terror lent wings to his feet. He thought of nothing but evading that cruel foe whose evil face seemed ever before him.

The whole of that night the child walked on. His limbs ached terribly, but that one dread of Bruno nerved him again to

action. He resolved now to walk during the nights, and rest during the days. It was foolish, because he thus robbed himself of the friendly aid and shelter that he had met with so far. But he could no longer think clearly.

He fancied he must be near Rome now. That broad shining water that ever and anon sparkled in the sunlight was the Tiber, and the very sight of it was as the sight of a friendly face.

At sunset he crept out of his hiding-place, and found a little peasant's hut near by, and went thither to buy some food for Coco and himself. The people were very poor, and had but little, but they took his money and gave him what he asked for, and told him to keep straight on by the old posting-road. It was plain enough to see.

He went on. He shivered in the chill mountain air, and felt tired and sick at heart; but he would not give in.

He thought of old Maruccia listening for his step as she counted her beads by the stove, and he thought, too, of the little Inglesi, with her face like one of Guido's angels, and he nerved himself for fresh efforts, and again walked the whole night long.

Day after day had the little English girl looked for word or sign, and day by day the old woman at Falconieri received the same answer—"No news yet."

At last, wearied by the child's entreaties, Mr. Rochfort wrote to the head of police at Florence, describing the boy, and asking for information respecting him. They could tell him nothing.

One night the old woman sat by her stove as usual, and the English child by her side, she having been weather-bound that day on her visit to the hills.

The rain was falling in sheets, and the wind blew in furious gusts around the old deserted pile.

Suddenly, in a pause of the tempest, the child heard a long, strange, wailing sound that seemed to come from the gates.

She started to her feet and listened, but Maruccia said it was only the wind, and she seated herself once more on her little stool, to hear those never-ending tales of Tista's babyhood and childhood that were sweeter to her ears than any fairy lore.

But again she sprang to her feet. That long, pitiful note once more reached her ears. It was the howl of a dog, and every sight and sound of the canine race held for her now that one association of Tista.

"He has come—I am sure he has come!"

she cried wildly, and dashed out into the loggia, and threw open the great door, that was only latched.

There was nothing to be seen. Only the blinding rain and the sweeping wind filled the night with sound. Old Maruccia hobbled out after her.

"There it is again!" cried the child, "beyond the outer gates. Oh, I must go—I must go!" And, without covering or wraps, she dashed out into the gloom and storm, and the old woman could but follow.

There was a momentary lull in the rain, and the wind drove back a pile of drifting clouds, and showed for a moment a faint streak of watery light from struggling moonbeams. But at the gate the woman and child stood speechless with terror and with awe, for there on the wet, cold stones lay a little prostrate figure, and beside it a dog sat shivering and soaked with rain, and lifted up his head, and uttered once again that pitiful wailing note.

The arms of the boy lay stretched towards the body of the dog, telling their own tale of famine and fatigue, and faithful love for this his only friend.

But his face was set in a frozen calm, and his eyes were closed.

So the last of the Falconieri perished at his own gates, with only a little foreign child and an old blind serving-woman to weep for him.

## THE SYLVESTER SAPPHIRES.

By PAUL CHALLINOR.

### CHAPTER I.

THE church clock struck four as we drove down the steep little bit of road from the rectory, where we had found nobody at home.

"Why, it's quite early!" said Decima, driving the pony knowingly round the sharp turn into the crooked lane that leads to the village. "Suppose we go and call at the Retreat?"

I felt Claude, who sat on the little seat behind us, give me one or two appealing digs in the back as she spoke, and, interpreting his feelings, replied hastily:

"But we called there only last week, and Lady Bevor hasn't returned it yet, and I'm sure they can't want to see us again so soon."

I spoke quite in a flutter, and not very

sensibly, I dare say, but I am not accustomed to differ from Decima; only this time, for Claude's sake, I made an effort.

Dear boy! it's funny why he should take it for granted that I am on his side whenever he objects to Decima's arrangements. He makes me feel quite wrong and rebellious sometimes when he grimaces secretly at me, or even makes jokes about dear sister Decima and her little ways.

"Don't, dear boy," I say; "I know you wouldn't really wish to be disrespectful; it's only thoughtlessness, I hope."

"Ah, young folks like you and me, Aunt Prilly, will be thoughtless," he sighs. "We shall both know better when we are as old as Aunt Decima."

He is a dear, good fellow with all his nonsense, and regularly comes down to Beech Lawn every vacation, to spend a week with his old aunties—and very good it is of him.

"Not at all," Decima declares. "Why, what can a young man wish for beyond what he gets here—a comfortable house, a good dinner, and the very best society in the county?"

Decima always deferred paying her calls till Claude came down, and then took him round in the pony-carriage to old Lady Carwiche's, and Pollard Court, the rectory, and the Retreat. Claude used to be very polite and friendly everywhere, but I used to think perhaps it wasn't quite what he was accustomed to at Cambridge after all.

Decima listened very contemptuously to my remarks this time.

"What nonsense you talk, Priscilla, when you know it was to enquire after dear Lady Bevor's swelled face and leave the clothing-club report that we called last; not a regular visit at all. We are going now, at any rate."

We had crossed the bridge over the river, and were ascending the hill as she spoke; and she whipped up Bessie and turned smartly down the shady green lane that led to the Retreat, while I leant back picturing to myself the coming half-hour. I knew the programme well. We should be shown into the big holland-covered drawing-room, tidy, chilly, and empty; and then requested to walk into the morning room, Lady Bevor's own sanctum, where she and Sir Sampson used to adjourn for dessert after their early dinner. He would be laboriously working through the debates in the Times; now and then reading an extract to little Lady Bevor, who would

be nestled in her big chair opposite, knitting, and dozing, and purring an occasional remark, looking as white, and soft, and well-cared-for, and luxuriously content with life as her big Persian cat on the rug. I could hear her sweet, monotonous little voice piping out questions to Decima about the management of her flowers or her poultry, or plaining over her troubles with her servants, or the Rector, or the Ladies' Committee; to which Decima—who never has any difficulties with anybody—would listen, grimly unsympathetic. Sir Sampson would cross-examine Claude about his studies at college, and relate with the same shake of the head, and the same jocular air of affected contrition, the same small anecdotes of his own wild doings at Trinity.

Here we came upon the entrance, with the stone pillars and heraldic beasts atop muffled in ivy; and so up the well-rolled gravel sweep, where no wheels but ours had left their traces that day. All my previsions deserted me suddenly as we crossed the solemn stone vestibule, and the butler flung open the drawing-room door. A bright fire blazed on the hearth, the big white fluffy rugs had been taken out of their holland covers, and the amber satin and Berlin-wool work of the furniture were displayed in all their splendour.

"They are going to have a dinner-party," I surmised. Lady Beevor was in her grey brocade and Irish point-lace set; Sir Sampson had his Times as usual, and his glass of port on the marble console-table at his elbow; but most perplexing to me of all was the appearance there of my little friend Minnie, their only child, sitting demurely in the window beside her governess, Miss Sprent. Minnie's eyes danced as she shook hands with me and retreated demurely to her corner. Sir Sampson greeted me with his usual elaborate politeness, but he, like the others, was evidently preoccupied with some new and strange experience. Presently the rector's wife, Mrs. Millicamp, made her appearance, and then the wonder reached its climax, for the door again opened, and the butler entered, bearing, with a look of severe disapproval, a silver tray with tea, and followed by the page-boy with bread-and-butter.

"Changes, changes!" sighed Sir Sampson solemnly; "all the doing of you ladies. Tea at this hour! My poor mother never would have believed it. Ah!"

"Sir Sampson and I are old people, and

like to keep to our good old-fashioned ways," piped little Lady Beevor, "but some concession must be made to society's requirements. We both feel it right, on Minnie's account, to throw ourselves a little more into the world than we have done hitherto. Minnie, my love, you shall pour out the tea. We are expecting a visitor next week. You must have heard of my niece, Mrs. Shaw Sylvester!" said the old lady with gentle complacency.

"What, *the* Mrs. Shaw-Sylvester?" cried the rector's wife with dubious emphasis.

Claude stopped in his low-toned chat with Minnie over the cream and sugaring, and stared blankly round.

"She wishes for some real rest and change before the season begins, and we shall be very pleased to receive her."

"We could do no less for a cousin of my lady's," interposed Sir Sampson somewhat crustily; "and if she is only coming to mend her ways and her complexion, she's welcome. But I'll not have my house upset with any fast new-fangled goings-on, and I'll have none of her town friends coming after her here either."

Sir Sampson was beginning to fume and get red in the forehead. Claude dexterously struck in:

"Will she bring the sapphires down, I wonder? You'll have to apply for a guard from the barracks, Sir Sampson, to keep the public off. They say they have to station extra police in the Park when she rides or drives there. The rush in the provinces will be terrific."

"She doesn't wear sapphires in Hyde Park!" asked Decima, who was rather puzzled by all this.

"Oh dear no," said Mrs. Millicamp with a little laugh of superior knowledge. "It's her beauty, you know, and her story—the sapphires."

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Millicamp," interrupted Lady Beevor nervously. "Minnie dear—you know how careless Jones is—will you run and see if the conservatory window is open, and if it is, send for him to close it!"

"May I go too, and see your hyacinths?" I asked, for Minnie and I were great friends, and I wanted to hear from her the meaning of these strange portents.

Minnie walked sedately beside me to the drawing-room door, closed it softly after us, and then gave three bounds and a twirl on the tips of her toes like a ballet-dancer. Then she put a hand on each of my shoulders, dropped a kiss

lightly on my lips, and skipped across the great stone hall to the arched glass doors opening into the conservatory; and all as noiselessly as a mouse, and as gracefully as a young fawn. Young people always do take liberties with me, somehow, which they would never venture on with Decima. Once she got me safely shut inside the conservatory, she broke out into the merriest peal of laughter.

"Oh, Miss Prilly dear, isn't it fun?"

"Isn't what fun, my dear child?"

"Everything! That meek little cat of an Agnes Blythe blossoming out into a beauty, and a leader of society. And my poor deluded parents believing in her and putting up with her assurance!"

"But—why? What?" I queried.

"Oh, I'll tell you all about it! I'm longing to set somebody to rights on the subject. Ages ago, when I was a wee thing, I remember Cousin Agnes coming here over and over again in her holidays—she was a governess—or while she was looking out for a situation. So meek, so shy, so timidly affectionate to mamma, and so polite to the servants! We all admired her and pitied her beyond anything—I don't to this day know why. We all had an idea that the Shaws bullied her frightfully. There was some story, that I was supposed not to hear, about the Shaws' old uncle, Mr. Sylvester. They were his only relatives, and he was hideously rich and decrepit, and had come from India to end his days with them, and leave them all his money; so when they caught him kissing Miss Blythe on the stairs there was a row—naturally—and off came Cousin Agnes to us, all tears, and blushes, and explanations. I used to try and fit the fragments I heard together, in vain. 'She had just told him that it might never, never be. She owed too much to the dear Shaws to think of supplanting them in his regard.' Then again, 'She would always be true to him, despite the threats of his mercenary relations. She would never sell herself for money.' Lastly, 'The world might say its worst. She knew how disinterested her love was.' You see, papa, mamma, old Uncle Sylvester, and Mr. Shaw, who came down here after him, all had different versions from her, and I heard them all. The game of cross-purposes went on till the worry and vexation brought on a fit of the gout that carried poor old Mr. Sylvester off the very day after he had signed a will leaving every sixpence he possessed to her—and the sapphires."

"What are the sapphires?" I asked, deeply interested.

"Oh, I can't tell you the whole story to-day. They are historical stones, worth thousands and thousands, which he had no business to leave to anyone out of the family. The Shaws were furious, and declared they would dispute the bequest. Mr. Shaw is a clever lawyer, and people were all talking about her, and the great case it would be, when poor Mrs. Shaw was suddenly taken ill. Agnes went and offered to nurse her, and got her somehow to forgive her on her death-bed; and next thing, as soon as she decently could, didn't she marry Mr. Shaw!"

"Good gracious! Why?" I gasped.

"How should I know, Miss Prilly! Perhaps she found it the only way of compromising the claim; perhaps she liked his position; it is a very good one, and hers was awkward enough just then. I believe she wanted to take it out of the daughters, who live somewhere with an old aunt in the country. She is a very great personage indeed. Mamma reads all about her in the society papers—her balls and theatricals, and the Royal Highnesses she dances with."

"Whatever in the world makes her come down here!" I exclaimed, rather impolitely, in my surprise.

Minnie laughed saucily.

"Don't you think she'll enjoy herself! It's a great piece of cheek," with a sudden, black little frown. "I suppose it suits her convenience in some way. Such a note came, inviting herself! 'Recollections of all your past kindness—must have repose—coming next Monday.' My poor infatuated mamma was quite delighted at the notion. Papa growls; he never was fond of her, but admits grumpily that it may be a missionary work to rescue her from her giddy ways—and the Duke."

"What Duke? My dear, I'm getting more and more confused."

"The idea of your not knowing! Why, Mrs. Millicamp has it all by heart! That's why we were sent out of the way, that they might have it all over in comfort. Naughty old people! The society papers are always hinting at his admiration, and how he follows her about, though he has a Duchess of his own; and mamma gets a flutter, and hides the paper, and Miss Sprent rummages it out again, and they whisper, and have settled that she may be coming here to break it off. Won't it be fun? You'll see it all. We're going to

give three dinner-parties. You will come, of course, and Mr. Claude——"

"Of course Mr. Claude," said a voice from the doorway that stopped Minnie's chatter at once. "Aunt Prilly, are you ready! Everyone is waiting."

They were in the hall. Decima, who is slightly deaf, was speaking.

"I didn't know who you were talking of. Of course I recollect Miss Agnes Blytha. So she is married, is she! We must call on her; and you must bring her to dine some evening. She will expect some attention from her old friends." And Decima nodded graciously, while I, thinking of Minnie's disclosures, felt rather doubtful and dismayed.

"Do you think she'll come?" I whispered to Minnie.

"Suppose she wears the sapphires!" suggested Claude.

"Or brings the Duke!" laughed saucy little Minnie in my ear.

#### CHAPTER II.

LEXLEY BRIDGE is a lovely little village, nestled down amongst its orchards by the riverside. Beech Lawn, our house, stands on the hillside above it; and facing us across the valley stand the grey old church and the new white rectory.

It is a quaint, picturesque, well-conducted little spot, but undeniably quiet. In the daytime I can hear the voices of the village children at play in the school playground as distinctly as the buzz of Decima's bees round their hives in the sunny south-walk where the apricots ripen so well, or the cackle of the hens in the poultry-yard. Decima manages hives, hens, cows, and stable, and garden, and does it beautifully.

My department is indoors. I keep the flower-vases filled, and the old china dusted, make the cakes and preserves, and keep the pretty chintzes and lace trimmings in the perfection of freshness and prettiness, I flatter myself. But it is quiet!

I sometimes think how cheerful it would be to hear little voices sounding in the tidy, empty rooms overhead, and tiny feet pattering off to bed; or, maybe, young folks on the lawn outside, playing tennis, or chattering and laughing under the beech-trees. Suppose the grass did get trodden bare here and there, or the chintzes and muslin chair-backs rumpled—what matter! The furniture would be all the better for

pulling about—for an impromptu dance, perhaps—and my knitting drops on my lap, and I fancy myself at the never-opened piano, playing the Bridal Waltz, and the room full of lights, and graceful, swaying young figures—they should all be pretty and young, and every girl should have the right partner, if old Aunt Prilly could have her way—and I am even smiling to myself, and beating time to the music sometimes, when Decima comes in, and makes me thankful for the darkness at which she exclaims. I have hinted my thoughts to her once or twice, to be met with kindly disapproval.

"Want of occupation, Prilly! If you would employ yourself as I do there would be no time left for such childish whimsies."

I dare say she's right, but I don't fancy she would care for my co-operation in any of her work—the G.F.S., or the schools, or the Ladies' Charity. She is most zealous and exemplary in one and all.

"I possess an excellent aide-de-camp in Miss Wyatt," the rector said one day, and Decima was cross for a week after.

Aide-de-camp, indeed! Decima must be commander-in-chief or nothing.

She is so in her own house, at any rate, and when, on Tuesday morning, she ordered Claude and me to be in readiness to drive with her to the Retreat, neither of us thought of hesitating for a moment. As I said before, Lexley Bridge is a very quiet neighbourhood, and any little event makes a commotion in it. The talk about the Beevors' expected visitor had been incessant for the last three days. People began on the subject of Mrs. Shaw-Sylvester directly we got out of church on Sunday. Our houses are all so scattered that after service is the only time we all do meet together in the week, so I suppose it was natural that Mrs. Shaw-Sylvester's name should be heard all over the churchyard before the congregation dispersed. One little group quite surrounded Sir Sampson and Lady Beever, and another Mrs. Millicamp and old Lady Carwichey, who is very deaf, and insists on having everything explained to her wherever she is. So there she stood on a grassy tomb, with her great yellow chariot and pair blocking up the lych-gate, and Mrs. Millicamp, quite hot and exhausted, screaming answers into her ear-trumpet. It really wasn't proper.

"Stole the diamonds, did she? And married the lawyer who got her off! Yes, yes: I heard von perfectly. What's the



good of your telling me it all over again!" she squeaked in her little high voice. "There, there, don't shriek at me, there's a dear woman. I hate being yelled at. Of course I'll call. It's all very shocking, but, as she's a cousin of Lady Beevor's, we'll say nothing about it. Nobody here need ever know." And off she trotted, her skirts tucked quite alarmingly high under her elbow, and her great black feathers nodding in her bonnet.

Mrs. Shaw-Sylvester was to arrive on the Monday, and on Tuesday, as I said, we started to pay our call on her. We were rather late, as Decima had a clothing club meeting, and it was past five when we drove up to the gates of the Retreat. They were wide open, and the neat gravel-drive all cut up and furrowed with wheel-tracks and marks of horses' hoofs. The white steps of the portico were simply disgraceful—like our back-kitchen on one of Decima's knitting-class days—and three dogs were fidgeting about—one all wet and muddy, and another scratching the nice, freshly-painted door dreadfully, and howling to get in. A dogcart was waiting near, and a carriage moved off to let us up. "Lord Bellamont's," Decima said. He is our Lord-Lieutenant, a very great personage indeed. The vestibule was all littered with wraps and umbrellas, and when we entered the drawing-room, it seemed fairly black with gentlemen, and the buzz of voices was perfectly bewildering.

Decima didn't care, and made her way right through everybody straight to Lady Beevor; but I wasn't bold enough to follow, and sank down on the first chair I came to, feeling quite confused and shy at not seeing a face I knew near me. After a minute I began to look about me. Lady Beevor was opposite to me, looking quite forlorn and uncomfortable out of her own chair and on the wrong side of the fireplace, nervously making conversation for Lady Gertrude and Lady Flora Mirabel, Lord Bellamont's daughters. They are tall, stiff young women, who go about everywhere in rough serge gowns and felt hats, give short answers, and do a great deal of good amongst the poor. Sir Sampson was standing on the hearthrug, looking anything but pleased; and when I looked farther, and saw three unmistakable officers round Minnie's tea-table, I couldn't wonder, knowing how he sets his face against military society. He was addressing a remark now and then to Lord Bella-

mount, who stood beside him, but who wasn't paying any particular attention to him, I thought.

I found I was just behind Mrs. Shaw-Sylvester. It could be no one else, and a most astonishing person she was. She was half lying in Lady Beevor's great chair, her head thrown back against the cushions, and her shoes and silk stockings half across the hearthrug; clothed from head to foot in red—bright red—just like a cardinal. A satin gown, akin-tight, came up close to her long white throat, with a ruffle of red lace round it. Her hair was primrose-yellow, piled up on the top, with great red creeping things in rubies sticking all over it, and two more ladybirds in her little white ears. Her eyes were very blue and long, with a queer way of looking under her thick, curly light lashes at people. Her complexion was wonderful, I must say. "She looked good to eat," as Claude put it afterwards. Tall, solemn Lord Bellamont, with his eyeglass, and his curly wig, and his tight waist, gazed down on her very approvingly at intervals, and cut poor Sir Sampson's speeches very short.

"You must come over to the Towers some day, Mrs. Shaw—ah—Sylvester. I—aw—flatter myself you will find much there worthy your notice. The conservatories are considered—aw—the first in England, and the—hum—haw—historical associations—"

"Oh, don't speak of anything so horrid!" cried Mrs. Shaw-Sylvester in a high-pitched, ear-piercing voice. "Quite too dreadful! Make it a picnic in the grounds, so that we needn't go near the historical associations at all. I can give you a day this week, but you must let me bring someone to talk to. Yes, Colonel Boulger," she went on to the fat old Colonel who came bustling up with her tea, a pale young man with an eyeglass carrying cream and sugar after him, "I should like to try the mare very much. Bring her over tomorrow—thanks, no sugar—and stay to luncheon. Bring that nice boy over there, indicating a youth who was bravely trying to keep up a conversation with Lady Flora. "He looks fun if one could get near enough to see him. Not that one," with a disdainful point of her red satin toe, with its great ruby buckle, towards the man with the cream-jug, who was by no means quite our of earshot yet. "And Jervoise—must have Jervoise. Do you hear?"

"No use asking him, 'pon my soul."

asseverated Colonel Boulger. "Did all I knew to-day; but he said he wouldn't come."

"Well, I must have him here to-morrow, or you and the mare may go home again. Now about your ball. Of course you'll give a ball while I'm here——"

The fat old Colonel leaned over her, and they got so very confidential and close together that, between the back of Mrs. Sylvester's chair, and the piano, and the Colonel, I could hardly breathe. Minnie came tripping across.

"Excuse me, Colonel Boulger, Miss Wyatt wants some tea. Won't you come across to the table?"

And so she extricated me out of my three-cornered prison, and I gladly followed her to the clearer space on the other side of the room. There we found Mrs. Millicamp playing deputy-hostess, as it were, to a mamma and daughters, old relations of the Sylvesters, who had driven sixteen miles from the other side of the county to see her, and as yet had not been honoured with a moment's notice. There was also a forlorn young officer, whom nobody knew, walking round alone examining the pictures on the walls. Claude helped Minnie to give us some tea, and to talk to the strange girls. Decima was deep in discussing the respective merits of pencilled Hamburgs and Cochins with Lady Gertrude, who was a poultry-fancier, and stayed on long after I was ready to go.

At last Lady Gertrude rose, and said "Good-bye," with a look of grim disapproval that I could see fluttered poor little Lady Beevor terribly, and Lord Bellamount followed her lead reluctantly.

Then Decima marched right up to Mrs. Sylvester.

"I haven't had a chance of speaking to you before, Mrs. Shaw-Sylvester. I'm very glad to see you again." She actually rose and looked polite, while Decima shook hands with her, and went on: "We hope to see you at Beech Lawn some day soon."

"Thanks so much; but I am here for rest, you know. My doctor has positively forbidden all exciting visiting." And she sank back into her chair languidly, and raised her eyebrows at the Colonel. I think she meant to be as impertinent as anyone could venture to be to Decima; but she never heeded, and dragged me up to receive a limp hand, and "Ah yes, Miss Friscilla, of course. How Time does make changes in old friends!"

Claude was received quite graciously.

"Are you anyone I ought to remember? I'm sure we've met in town. Come in to tea, some day, and tell me where it was."

Dear me! she was a surprising young person.

We saw no more of her for some little time; but the doings at the Retreat were the talk of the village. Mrs. Millicamp came home furious from a dinner-party there.

"Kept us all waiting half an hour, my dear, and then came in in a muslin frock and a pink sash, like a baby, and never apologised. The Rector sat next her, and actually admires her. She must be a hypocrite. Think of her actually giving Mr. Peploe, the curate, a handful of her photographs. 'The idea of your not knowing me!' I heard her say to him. 'Don't say such a thing again. It's too impossible.' I found them all on his chimney-piece just now, and gave him my opinion of her. After dinner she put her feet up on the sofa, and went to sleep behind her big feather-fan till the gentlemen came in; and then she went off to the conservatory for hours with Lord Bellamount. It's scandalous!"

Next time it was, "Have you heard that the Beevors' servants have all given notice? The coachman won't stand having his horses taken to Oldminster two days running; and the cook objects to eleven o'clock breakfasts, and more people than she can calculate on coming in to luncheon."

"Poor Sir Sampson!" I sighed, and Decima shook her head ominously.

#### CHAPTER III.

OUR little dinner-party was to come off about a week after Mrs. Shaw-Sylvester's arrival. I couldn't help anticipating it with many heart-sinkings. I confided them to Claude.

"All right, auntie. If she doesn't like coming she can keep away and send that nice little Miss Minnie instead—and I wish she would," was all I got from him. Nothing ever puts Decima out, fortunately. She was giving the dinner to satisfy herself, not Mrs. Sylvester, and was quite indifferent to that lady's views of it. She made out her list of guests carefully, and they all accepted. The Beevors and Mrs. Sylvester, the Rector and Mrs. Millicamp, Mr. Peploe, the Percival Pollards and their eldest son, and a bride and bridegroom we had wanted to ask for some time—a

Mr. and Lady Evelina Corbett, strangers to every one—fourteen in all, counting ourselves and Claude.

I was giving out the best table-linen and napkins, and seeing that Maria had got her silver in proper order, when Minnie, in a fresh cotton gown, with a big basket on her arm, came tripping across the lawn from the side-entrance. I had just picked up my sun-bonnet and was going to meet her, when I saw Claude get up from under the beech-tree, shake himself, and go up to her, so I took it off again; but it was more than twenty minutes before he brought her in, after all.

"Mamma thought you would like some of our azaleas, Miss Priscilla," she said, opening her basket; "and when I went to get them, poor old Posnett, with tears in his eyes, begged me to take these too." "These" were the first gathering of Sir Sampson's famous forced strawberries. "It would go to his heart to see them ill-treated. That London lady and her crew, coming into his houses with their cigars, leaving the doors all open behind them, would make no more of plucking them than if they were so many blackberries, and a gardener has his feelings. So here they are," Minnie went on, "and Posnett is happy. May I help to arrange your flowers for you? What lovely old glass! Anything ought to look well in it."

I accepted her offer, and she and Claude had a great rummage over my china closet, where they declared they found "perfect treasures." They wanted to stow away the epergne again; but I knew Decima's feelings would never stand that. I asked Minnie to stay to luncheon, but she declined.

"We shall be all to ourselves at home to-day. Think of that! I'm going back to enjoy it. Please, Mr. Claude, I want some more ivy-trails. Small leaves, as delicate as you can find." She looked up at me with piteous eyes when he had gone. "Think of that woman going to Oldminster Races—those horrid, discreditable things that papa and the Dean have been trying to put down for years. Papa was firm in maintaining that his carriage should not be seen on the course. Much she cared! Off she went on the regimental drag with a party of her friends. Those men are always trooping in and out of the house, everlastingly getting up something or other, and she orders the servants about, and snubs our old friends and makes herself altogether hateful. I know it was

through some of her impertinence that Mrs. Popham and the Bishop have declined our invitation for the 27th. The Shaw of Scene won't come. I expect you'll refuse to meet her again after to-night, or, if you don't, some of your guests will. Poor mamma! At first she was so delighted to see all our parties noticed in the Upper Ten and the other society papers. She made excuses for the woman as long as she could, but she's heartily sick of her by this time."

"When is she going to leave you?" I asked, much dismayed at Minnie's revelations, and devoutly wishing that this evening were safely over.

"Think of her wanting to stay another month! Her house in town is being done up, she says, but there must be some other reason, and it's sure to be a bad one. She is always talking of the grand people who want her. If she'd only go to some of them, before she drives my poor dear father into his grave!"

Minnie spoke energetically, her cheeks burning with indignation, her eyestwinkling with angry tears; but Claude appeared with his ivy, and she said no more. She finished her work in silence, and departed, Claude insisting on carrying back the basket. They passed close under my window, and I could not help overhearing them.

"I am vexed and mortified," she said, "and that's why I was crying, but it's no affair of yours that I'm aware of, and very rude on your part to notice it."

"But it is my affair if you are vexed and mortified and I can prevent it," Claude said audaciously.

"But you can't."

"But I can. Try me, Minnie darling, and if I don't——"

Dear me! What would Decima have said?

Everyone had arrived that evening before the party from the Retreat. The bride, Lady Evelina, was a stately young person, handsome, clever, and very well connected. She was in her wedding-dress, quite prepared to be the centre of attraction for the evening. I think Mrs. Shaw-Sylvester must have expected to meet her, and was prepared to crush out hopelessly any rival claims to admiration. I never saw her look so beautiful and so gracious, and she wore the sapphires. A splendid night! Her dress was a fluffy, indefinite mass of white net over white satin, with all

fluffiness caught together on one side by a huge sapphire cluster. She had a tiara of sapphires in her hair, sapphires in a broad collar round her neck, and in her ears, and in broad bands round her arms above the elbows—all the sleeves she had—in a great rosette on one shoulder, fastening her long gloves with about twenty buttons each, in her shoes, at her waist, where a star and long chain held her fan, and encrusting her bouquet-holder in masses. She was one blue blaze. Lady Evelina's white satin and pearls were utterly eclipsed. Lady Bevor looked like a little frightened white mouse, instead of her usual comfortable, purring, complacent self; Sir Sampson, haggard and threatening. However, their minds were to be set at rest for this one night at least, for their distinguished visitor was determinedly gracious. I shall always believe that, like everyone else, she was decidedly afraid of Decima. At any rate, her manner this evening was quite what it ought to be. Nothing could be more polite than she was to Mr. Percival Pollard, who took her in to dinner, and to whom I presently heard her telling the whole story of the sapphires. Of course everybody at the table stopped talking, and listened too.

"I don't like to say what they are valued at, but it is enough to make me very miserable. Stuart declares that he won't be responsible for them if I leave them at home; and I leave you to imagine what it is to go travelling about with such an encumbrance. I am afraid to wear them; I am indeed! This is the only time they have been on, and Sir Sampson can tell you what a weight on my mind they are when they are off."

"I do know," Sir Sampson growled to Lady Evelina. "We've all been roused out of our beds twice by a scare of burglars."

"You are safe here, if anywhere," smiled the Rector reassuringly. "Lexley is the most honest of little villages."

"If it wasn't, my strong-room would be a tough business for the cleverest of thieves," Sir Sampson added.

"Oh, but suppose they murdered you and took your keys," suggested Mrs. Sylvester cheerfully.

"Fudge!" he growled. "Your jewels are as safe as the Bank."

"We must all be sworn in as special constables to defend the Retreat," simpered Mr. Corbett, a gentle young man with beautiful teeth.

Lady Evelina flashed a glance at him across the table, which made him bring his smile to a conclusion and look thoughtful; it was only for a moment, though, for Mrs. Sylvester, deserting Mr. Pollard, began to drop her long, sideway glances on him, and very soon roused him into defiant cheerfulness. I was hardly surprised, some time later in the drawing-room, when I asked Lady Evelina whether Mrs. Shaw-Sylvester had been introduced to her, to receive an emphatic but civil "No, thanks"; but I could not understand the look of quiet suspicion that gleamed from under her black eyelashes now and then, as she glanced across the room to where her beautiful rival gracefully dozed in her low chair. When the gentlemen joined us, the party, despite all I could do, persisted in dividing itself unequally. Lady Evelina suddenly seemed to rouse herself, and, by sheer force of character and charm of novelty, to carry everything before her. Her husband had glided up to her with a contrite air, and Mr. Peploe, with his rectoress's eye on him, was fain to seek refuge from the wiles of his enchantress in hovering round her; the Percival Pollards were anxious to make themselves agreeable to a new neighbour, and Claude had carried off Sir Sampson to a distant corner, where I was rejoiced to see he was evidently making himself so very entertaining as to cause the first gleam of satisfaction to shine on the poor old gentleman's face that had brightened it since the arrival of their fascinating visitor. I wondered what they could be discussing so earnestly, and so did Mrs. Sylvester, who manifestly did not approve of having only the Rector left to her share, and whose good behaviour I feared might be giving way under the strain. At last the Beevors' carriage was announced, and she jumped up with most uncomplimentary readiness.

"Good-night," she said, holding out her hand to Mr. Corbett, and, under Lady Evelina's very eyes, giving him a most affectionate look. "I have only just found out who you are. The nephew of a very dear friend of mine. Have you heard from the Duke of Pomfret lately?"

"My wife's uncle, you mean?" said Mr. Corbett uneasily. "Well, no—not for some time."

"He has gone to Norway, salmon-fishing," added Lady Evelina with a well-satisfied air.

"Oh, has he?" asked Mrs. Sylvester with a malicious little laugh. "Well,

don't be surprised if he comes back again, that's all. I dare say you may meet him here some of these days before I leave."

Lady Beevor stood gasping and scandalised; Lady Evelina's black brows contracted into a dangerous frown; and Sir Sampson, bustling up, exclaimed:

"What! What! Pomfret! The Duke of Pomfret! Now, what were you telling me about him, my lady?" But here Claude had the presence of mind to offer his arm, and take her off to the carriage before more mischief was done.

"My dear," said Mrs. Millicamp to me as we were bidding farewell, "if Sir Sampson stands that it will bring a judgment down on the Retreat, if there's a sense of justice left in heaven."

#### CHAPTER IV.

"PRISCILLA!" cried Decima, bursting in upon us from the garden next morning, "the Retreat has been broken into!"

"What!" I cried, jumping up, while all in a flash thoughts of Mrs. Millicamp's last words, Mrs. Sylvester's terrors, and Sir Sampson's boasting, came before me, and dropping a teaspoon all amongst the cups with a horrid clatter that made me fifty times more startled. "The Retreat! The sapphires! Gone?"

"I never said so. How absurdly nervous you are getting!" she answered crossly, and departed, leaving me as much put out by her injustice as by the intelligence. As if she didn't know perfectly well that I always waited to add the second boiling water to the teapot till I heard her hanging up her garden-hat and ulster in the passage, and now, when she tramped in with both on, and such a story, how was I to help feeling scared and astray?

"Never mind, auntie," said Claude kindly, peeping under the cover at the grilled bones, "we shall hear all about it presently. Aunt Decima is only a wee bit ashamed of giving way to excitement herself."

She came in quite coolly in a moment more, and actually said nothing till I had poured out the tea, and Claude had told her he was dying of curiosity to hear everything. She had heard it from our man Briggs, who had been sent for early that morning by old Posnett to assist in the search for the burglars.

"What have they done, and how did they get in?" I enquired timidly.

"That's the mystery. They came for the sapphires, of course, but whether they were disturbed or found the strong-room too much for them, or whether they only came to spy before making a regularly organised attack on the place—and this seems the most likely view—no one can tell. They have carried off nothing, except some college-cups of Sir Sampson's, and Lady Beevor's ivory backed prayer-book, and a lot of dessert-knives—only electro, fortunately. It was a most daring attempt. The men must have got into the house while the family were here last night"—("Here!" I declare it made me feel as if we were accomplices!)"—and concealed themselves either in the coal-cellar or the housemaid's closet. Sir Sampson invited Mrs. Sylvester to go the rounds with him and the butler that night, just to show her how secure everything was. They all recollect that the doors of both places were locked. It must have been on the inside. When all were asleep, the villains let themselves out, and prowled round."

Ugh! I shivered at the bare notion!

"But how did they get away?" asked Claude.

"Out of the dining-room window. They had muffled the bell with an antimacassar, and opened the shutters. They could jump down quite easily on to the gravel drive."

"But the dog?"

"Poor Tiny, who sleeps in the hall, must have been drugged. She was very sick this morning, or she would certainly have aroused the house."

"Perhaps it was someone about the place that she knew," I faltered, "for one doesn't know who to suspect."

"Still she would hear them before she could recognise them," objected Claude.

I was in such a flutter that I couldn't drink my tea, which indeed had not stood as long as I liked it, and Decima's hand shook as she carved the cold pheasant.

"I have sent Briggs," she said, "to see if he could be of any assistance, though Superintendent Simms and his men were sent for at once. Perhaps you had better go, Claude, and see if there's anything you can do; and, Priscilla, we certainly ought to drive over this afternoon and enquire after poor Lady Beevor after such a shock."

I agreed, in a terrible flutter still, hardly felt safe in venturing near the scene of such a daring atrocity, but I reflected that the police would still be there. Still, I knew the gang would not give up a chance of plunder at the first disappointment, and

would be sure to be lurking about in the neighbourhood. I gave a sudden start and a gasp, as a thought crossed my mind.

"The silver!" I cried. "It was all left out last night. If they knew and had come on here?"

Decima looked suddenly grave.

"They knew we had a man on the premises. We are quite safe, Priscilla. Claude, come this way for a minute."

"Oh, don't try to spare me!" I implored. "I would much rather know the worst. There was someone prowling about last night. I distinctly heard it."

"I heard it too, but I was afraid to mention it before you," said Decima kindly.

"But it was so early in the night, that I fancy they may have only been spying about to make sure that the Beevors had really left us. Footsteps on the gravel, and a window tried. I meant to ask Briggs or Hannah."

"No, don't," said Claude hurriedly. "I heard—that is, I did it. It—it was such a hot night that I couldn't sleep, and opened my window, and something dropped out. I was foolish enough to get out and go down the ivy after it. I'm sorry I alarmed you. Better not talk about it, as it will only show how easy it is to get in and out of that room."

"Very foolish of you," said Decima with dissatisfaction, and left the room, but I lingered over putting by the tea and jam.

"Claude dear, do you mind telling me. You were out a long time. Didn't you really hear burglars, and go out in search of them?"

"Nonsense, Aunt Prilly! Never tell, and I'll confide in you. I went out and had a smoke."

And I, knowing Decima's views, kept his secret.

We drove up to the Retreat that afternoon, to find the great gates closed on a neat and orderly, well-raked carriage-drive. From the spotless white steps we stepped into a house folded in the enchanted sleep of a month ago, before the dawn of its first day of woe. We were shown into a drawing-room already re-covered in holland and chintz, and thence into the morning-room, where, in the depths of her own cosy chair, little Lady Beevor knitted, smiling to herself, and Sir Sampson, wine-glass in hand, between the sips was nodding approval of the Conservative speeches in the House last night. Both rose to welcome us with even an extra shade of cordiality.

"My dear ladies have you come to make

sure of our safety?" said Sir Sampson with a little gentle laugh.

"Where's Mrs. Sylvester?" asked Decima in her point-blank way.

"Where indeed? You did not expect to find her here, did you? There was no prevailing on her to stay, I can assure you," answered the old gentleman, shaking his head with a knowing twinkle in his eye. "Not a moment longer than was necessary to put the horses in the carriage. Master Claude volunteered his escort, armed with my pistols, and with a policeman on the box, off they started straight to Lord Bellamont's to throw herself on his hospitality for a few days."

"Poor wretch!" said Decima.

I don't exactly know which she meant, though.

"Claude and Minnie have been examining the shrubberies ever since he got home," piped Lady Beevor. "He is so kind and energetic."

"You have sent for a London detective, of course?" demanded Decima. "The gang must still be about."

"A London detective—of course not! Why should I? Haven't we Simms, who knows the country well? Can't he do everything needful?"

"Simms! You called him an old turnip-head yourself, Sir Sampson, at the last magistrates' meeting."

"Did I?" laughing. "Well, all the more reason to make amends for the insult. Seriously, my dear lady, what do you expect another man could do? The sapphires were the object of the visit; and, now they are gone, all the danger is over. I've promised my lady to put up a door and a bar to it at the head of the kitchen-staircase, and buy a sharp dog for the yard. No; depend upon it the burglars are safe in town again by this time, and we need never hear more of them."

"I don't agree with you," said Decima shortly, and the subject dropped.

She sent me home in the pony-carriage, and stayed to be taken over all the scene of the proposed burglary by Sir Sampson. She came home no better satisfied. I knew, by the way she stopped knitting now and then to bite the head of her needle and frown, that she was making up her mind to something, and next morning it came out.

"It's a want of public spirit on Sir Sampson's part treating the matter thus," she began suddenly at breakfast. "I shall go over there at once, and shall try to

make him and Lady Beever see it in its proper light. I shall see Simms and make him demand further assistance; and I shall suggest to Sir Sampson to telegraph to Scotland Yard directly."

Of course we all knew what to expect when Decima took that tone. Claude raised his eyebrows resignedly, but made no objection, and I was not surprised to learn, on Decima's return, that she had carried every point just as she had intended.

So the London man came down three hours later, and I believe he fluttered poor Lady Beever a great deal more than the burglars.

#### CHAPTER V.

SUPERINTENDENT SIMMS was very facetious about London sharpness, when he looked in on us by Decima's desire. The new comer had only loafed about and listened to everybody's story with a disappointed, uninterested air; nor did he seem to see his way to anything.

Claude's report of him next day was to much the same effect. He had done nothing, and said no more. He had made himself very pleasant and friendly to the servant-maids, and enjoyed the garden and grounds like a regular cockney.

Decima, feeling responsible for him, was regularly exasperated; and when she ordered the carriage round, and me to be ready, I felt sure that London man was going to hear her views of his duty.

The news of the robbery had spread far and wide by this time, and brought as great a flood of visitors to the Retreat as even the society beauty. The Percival Pollards' carriage was waiting outside, and the Millicamps were on the doorstep.

Lady Beever received us quite animatedly, and seemed to enjoy the excitement.

Decima at once called Sir Sampson aside, and spoke to him in her brief, decided manner. "Not to put up with it, and to lose no time in telling him so," I heard her advise.

Sir Sampson gently smiled, and seemed at a loss for reply, when the butler appeared with "Could Superintendent Simms speak to you for a moment, please?"

Everybody turned excitedly.

"Oh, do let us hear what he has to say!" exclaimed Mrs. Pollard and the Rector's wife together.

Sir Sampson smiled indulgently at this display of feminine curiosity.

"By all means. Shall we adjourn to the library?" and we crossed the hall in a body.

Sir Sampson used the room to transact all his magistrate's business in, and sank into his great leather armchair by the writing-table with comfortable dignity. Decima took the next chair to him, as if it were a seat on the bench. The rest of us settled down modestly afar off, and Superintendent Simms made his dignified entry.

After all, he had nothing of any importance to say.

"Next Tuesday being Grimethorpe Cattle Show, sir, I wish to know whether one of my men will be still required here on special duty. We are rather short-handed, you see. Having the officer from London, I thought Constable Dobbs might be spared now, perhaps;" and Simms stopped with a slightly satirical smile.

Decima leaned over and made an urgent remark to Sir Sampson.

"A good opportunity," she said.

"Certainly," he agreed. "Just stand aside for a minute, Simms, and"—to the butler—"give my compliments to Mr. Diver and ask him to step in here for a minute."

We watched with expectation, followed by utter disappointment, the appearance of "the London man."

Not a bit like a detective; more like—well, nobody in particular. No piercing eyes, no searching manner, and as one had been led to expect from a detective. He bowed to us politely, and stood looking rather embarrassed and awkward, waiting for Sir Sampson to speak to him. Sir Sampson was somewhat embarrassed, too; but, urged by a look from Decima, he cleared his throat, and began impressively:

"Superintendent Simms, Mr. Diver, has been consulting me as to the necessity of any further guard on this establishment. Before authorising its withdrawal I wished to consult you, and learn whether your researches have as yet led to anything. Are you prepared to name or put your hand on the perpetrators of the last outrage?" He paused with a self-satisfied glance at Decima.

"Well, not exactly," the little man replied hesitatingly. "I may say I am in possession of an important clue, but it would be premature and ill-advised to mention it just now."

"The usual thing," said Decima with a glance of scorn.

"Ha! May I ask its nature?"

"I hope you'll excuse me. I would rather not make it public," he answered more miserably than before.

Simms coughed with derisive meaning.

"It is not making it public to mention it here. I can trust the discretion of these ladies and gentlemen. I must request that you explain at once how far you have got in your search."

Sir Sampson spoke determinedly, as one who would brook no further trifling.

"Very good, sir. If you take the responsibility I can have no objection. You'll understand that the least publicity will infallibly lead to a miscarriage of justice, but as you insist—" He seemed waiting for a loophole of escape, but, as none was given him, sighed, and continued in the same tone of dismal protest: "I can tell you how the burglars got in, Sir Sampson, what they did when they were in, and how they got out again. I know where the plunder is, and who put it there; and what I'm waiting for now is to see who is coming to take it away."

Here was a statement with a vengeance! I never saw a man so chapfallen as Simms, except Sir Sampson, who looked ready to go down on his knees to Diver on the spot. Decima alone sniffed incredulously:

"I think we knew most of that before, did we not?"

"Perhaps so, ma'am," he replied with special deference. "There were a few mistakes in detail to correct in the last report. The coal-cellar, for instance—"

"Why, why?" broke in Sir Sampson; "where else could the fellow have hidden? Brindly, and I, and Mrs. Sylvester were in every other corner of the place that night. Weren't we, Brindly?"

"We was, Sir Sampson," affirmed Brindly solemnly.

"He must have been secreted there. The door was fast, just as if the cook had locked it and removed the key—eh, Brindly?"

"It were, Sir Sampson."

"That key won't work from the inside. I suppose nobody has actually tried locking himself in there," went on the melancholy little man. "It goes in, and that is all. No, there is no other place on that floor where he could have been hidden, nor on the upper floor either—except where he was—and I'll stake my professional reputation on it."

"And where's that?"

"In your dressing-room, Sir Sampson. I'm not prepared to say how he got there, but there he was, and through that window his accomplice entered."

"But—but—why—what are you talking about? Then where the deuce was I?" demanded Sir Sampson, almost choked with astonishment and wrath.

"That I can't say either, sir; but perhaps I may find out presently."

Sir Sampson dropped back in his chair, puffing out his cheeks and opening his eyes wide with amazement. Diver went on:

"There was a second concerned in it, I happen to know, and he came in through that window. It's a nice easy way, not too high from the ground, on the slope of the hill, in complete shadow, with the big bed of laurels below for a cover. There was the gardener's ladder just handy in the tool-shed round the corner, too; all he wanted was the friend inside to let him in. Then they went and scratched a bit at the strong-room door, not with regular professional tools, mind you—nor with anything that had a chance of getting into it; then they gave it up and collected what they could—rather an odd selection, looked at from a professional point of view, too—when a chisel would have opened the side-board where the butler keeps his spare silver, as any child might have guessed. They played those games in the dining-room just to throw you off the scent; no fear of their venturing out of that window in full view from the bedrooms, with a broad moon, and not a scrap of cover for a hundred yards anyway."

"They might have made a dash for the rhododendron clump, and so into the drive and over the wall without passing the lodge-gates," Claude suggested.

"They might, but they didn't, as I happen to know. They just took the easiest plan and got out as they came in, with their swag tied up in a bundle with the drawing-room bell-rope, dropped into the bushes under the window, hung up the ladder nice and tidy, and got away by the shady little path behind the forcing-houses."

"All guess-work," muttered Simms.

"Just so—and so I didn't care to mention it at first. Along the ditch in the field at the bottom of the garden, is where I should have gone myself, and so did they. A gap in the hedge comes handy for getting into the little copse, and right



away to the old sandpit where, in a hole under the brambles that I know of, if I'm not much mistaken, you'll find all your property safe and sound, Sir Sampson, wrapped in the Standard of the day before."

"If you know it's there, what did you leave it there for?" put in the Rector.

"Just to see who's going to come after it," was the cool reply, "though I can make a good guess at that too."

Sir Sampson merely gazed in blank wonder. Claude looked actually as scared as I felt at this wonderful magician in our midst, who went on in his doleful, unemphatic little tone, as if under compulsion:

"The cinder-path would hold no trace; but there's a bed under the window where the foot of the ladder has left two dents with footmarks about. First came someone young and light, who was careful to keep on the grass, but left the marks of the bundle and the rope on the soft earth; down on top of that comes a heavier tread, and its marks I found once again in the sand of the pit, not ten yards from the spot where the plunder was hidden."

"And whose was it?" demanded Decima.

"The footmark of someone who wears shoes not of a size, and a different cut, with a piece of leather an inch deep added on to the heel of the right foot."

"Why, why? The devil!—my dear, I beg pardon—but does he mean to say it's me?" spluttered Sir Sampson.

"Or some one who wears your old boots," amended Claude.

"That's it. Now, I ask myself, who does Sir Sampson's man give these boots—which won't suit everybody—to? Only one person in the place can wear them, and he gets them. He is familiar with the house, and has not too good a character in the country. I mean that a loafing cad of an Irishman, Andy Mahony, with no settled residence or means of support, was seen at the Oldminster races last week unaccountably flush of money, was employed weeding here for some time previously——"

"Andy—poor old Andy!" exclaimed Lady Beever. "Impossible!"

"Quite so. Quite out of the question," interposed her husband. "No, that won't do."

"There's never been anything against him except want of a settled line of life," spoke Simms.

He didn't want to agree with Diver more than he could help, evidently.

"What does he do for a living?" someone asked.

"Goes harvesting, thatching, reek-scaring, or stone-picking—all manner of odd jobs for the farmers; has been taken on here as a beater, or as odd man about the stables for a time. In fact, he can turn his hand to anything"—"Poaching included," I overheard from Mr. Millicamp—"only he seems a born vagrant, and won't take a regular situation anywhere."

Diver listened, looking mournfully positive.

"As honest as the day!" protested Sir Sampson. "Too bad to take away his character on mere presumption. I won't have it! I tell you I won't!" he fumed angrily.

"Excuse me, Sir Sampson, but I think it hardly rests with you now," interrupted the Rector, who had a great idea of his own judicial ability. "It is a matter of public concern, and I for one should have no hesitation in giving a warrant for his immediate arrest."

Sir Sampson got so red that I thought he was going to break out with something very unneighbourly, when Decima exclaimed:

"Why, there he is, wheeling a barrow after the gardener! Why not have him in and examine him?"

"Oh, do. It would be so interesting!" cried Mrs. Pollard.

"Quite the best way," assented Claude, "for if he can satisfactorily account for his doings that night, it will save you a further trouble, you know."

"I may as well go back to town by the six-fifteen express for all the good I shall do here after this. The case is being destroyed before my eyes."

Nobody answered him, for Simms had opened the window and collared, with some ceremony, a little, shambling, meagre old man, with a pathetic Irish face and sharp eyes like a weasel's.

"Ah thin, for the love of marcy, will you tell me what I'm here for, Misther Simms dear?" he whimpered, gazing round with a woebegone mouth, but keen, watery eyes.

"Never you mind, Andy. All you got to do is to answer a few questions as straight as you can," said Simms encouragingly.

"Most improper! I can take no part in this," protested Sir Sampson, rising from his great chair with upraised hands. "I'm a magistrate, I know, but I'm an interested

party. It'll be a regular scandal. Bless my soul, we shall have the papers taking it up!"

"They are much more likely to take it up if you attempt to hush up a criminal offence," declared Decima. "But here are Mr. Pollard and the Rector, both magistrates, too. They can act, if you can't."

The Rector rose briskly to assume Sir Sampson's place, and Mr. Pollard drew up his chair to the other side of the table. Simms and Andy stood in the middle of the room. Diver walked off to the window, and stood looking out in speechless disgust.

"Now, Andy Mahony, this is a serious business; you must be careful and speak the truth. Where were you on the night of the 14th instant?"

"The what, sir?"

"Give an account of your doings on the night of the 14th of this month."

"When would that be, sir?"

"Last Tuesday," put in Decima.

"Ah, an' where should I be but in my bed an' asleep, afther the day's work I had over them tatoes of Mither Dalton's. As purty a crop as iver you see, av the weeds would lave room for anything but themselves——"

"Never mind Dalton's potatoes. What were you doing at night?"

"Then it's the misthress herself can tell you. 'Andy,' says she, 'there's that little red cow—the cratur——'"

"Never mind Mrs. Dalton's cow."

"You're right, your honour. It's not for me to be boasting, but when she came round in the mornin', 'Andy,' says she, 'it's a good work you've done this night.'"

"What, you spent the night in the stable doctoring the cow?"

Andy nodded.

"Well, if you and the Daltons can prove that, there can be no possible grounds for committing you," said good-natured old Mr. Pollard, and Sir Sampson nodded beamingly.

"But, good gracious! you're not going to let him off like that!" cried Decima. "Let me talk to him," and she marched up determinedly. "Now, Andy, we're going to stand no nonsense. You've got to tell us all you know about the robbery here that night. You were mixed up in it—there's no denying it. Why, the very shoes on your feet prove it. How did the marks of them come under Sir Sampson's dressing-room window, if you weren't there?"

"This is very irregular!" declared Mr. Millicamp ineffectually.

"Yes, Andy," interpose Claude quickly; "that's what you've got to explain to us—how the marks came there, and again at the sandpit in Burtenahaw's copse. Don't be frightened. Take your time about it," and Claude laid his hand on Andy's arm, and, I suppose it was to encourage him, but I could have declared I saw him give him a wink!

"This is most irregular!" thundered the Rector, with no more result than before. We were all listening intently for Andy's response to the two adjurations.

"Guilty, please, your honour; but I'll never do it again!"

Such a flutter of astonishment swept over us! Mr. Diver turned round quite briskly. Simms made a strenuous grab at Andy's ragged collar, and Decima, after gazing round on us all with grim triumph, marched back to her seat, saying:

"You may resume your examination now, I think, Mr. Millicamp."

"Andy, what do you mean, sir? It's a confounded lie!" burst from Sir Sampson; but Claude seemed to silence him.

"Me break into your house, sir! Sorra a fut have I set in it till this day. It was the martin's nest over the window you bid me clear, an' it's meeself forgot to rake the beds afther, but the copse——" he paused and looked round piteously, and went on in a whimper: "Wid ye let me off this wanst? I'll never threepass agin as long as I live. The young birds was on my mind, sir, and when John Benyon told me he'd seen the track of a fox there, I just crep' in to take a look round, and set a bit of a thrap in the old sandpit, an' I know it was again orders——"

"Trapping foxes! Why he's a worse villain than we took him for!" exclaimed Mr. Pollard.

"I didn't catch him, sir; an' I'll niver thry again. Wid ye forgive me this wanst?"

"I hope nothing more may be said about this," implored Sir Sampson. "You can all see how unpleasant it would be for me if it were known in the county that such a thing were attempted on my property. I'll take good care it never occurs again."

"Of course," said Mr. Pollard. "We must hush it up at any cost. It will be only neighbourly to do so. Trapping foxes! Good Heavens! we should never hear the last of it!"

The Rector meditated frowningly.

"I shall go and cross-examine John Benyon on my way home——"

"I can always bring Andy up again if

he's wanted," urged Simms confidentially, quite exhilarated by the downfall of his rival's case.

I looked up for Mr. Diver, and I declare that what I saw gave me quite a turn. He was hidden behind the window-curtain, almost doubled in two, and convulsed with perfectly silent laughter. He was upright and stiff as a poker in a second, when he caught me looking at him, though.

"What are you going to do next?" I asked him timidly.

"Take myself off as soon as I can, ma'am. It's been a sinful waste of my time here. I can't regret it, though," he suddenly burst out. "It's a joke that will last me my life," and he laughed again. "I beg your pardon, ma'am, but I've just made a discovery, and the satisfaction to my mind rather overcomes me at times."

"What, not the real burglars?" I whispered.

"Don't you alarm yourself, ma'am; but I could put my hand on the pair of them this minute—and I won't."

He slipped out through the open window, leaving me to think, as the only possible explanation, that the sudden disappointment must have affected his brain.

That was really the end of the great Lexley Bridge excitement. It left us all very much as we were before. Nobody was a penny the worse. The plate and the prayer-book have been recovered, Claude is in higher favour than ever with Sir Sampson, and has taken up his abode at the Retreat for the rest of the vacation—as a protection.

Lady Beever certainly murmurs gently at her husband thinking it necessary to allow Andy Mahony a shilling a week for the rest of his days, and cannot understand why Sir Sampson and Claude both declare his evidence to have been worth double the money.

Mr. Diver departed in high satisfaction with the liberal way in which his services were rewarded. He has staked his professional word to Lady Beever that he can keep his eye on the real burglars, and that he can answer for it that there is not the remotest chance of the attack on the house ever being repeated.

"Unless the lady comes here again to make it worth while. I think, for your own peace of mind, ma'am, I'd take good care to shut the doors of the Retreat for the future against the famous Mrs. Shaw-Sylvester and the Sylvester Sapphires."

## TWO LOVE STORIES.

By MARIA L. JENKIN.

### CHAPTER I.

FORTY years ago, the street had a marvellously different character to that which it bears to-day. Then it was fashionable; now it is only near to the haunts of fashion—a very different thing.

Forty years ago, Miss Treherne was young—very young—a girl living at home in her father's house, her father a wealthy man. Now all that old pleasant life was past. The large house in Hereford Street had to be sold on her father's death, but the smaller one—Number Eleven, opposite—she was to take as part of her inheritance. The country-house—indeed, all the place at Baynham—went to George, the eldest son; and to every other one of the six children was a house bequeathed.

Acres of market-gardens spread out beyond Hereford Street forty years ago. Now, bricks and mortar have stamped out every vestige of cabbage, or early peas, or canes of the sweet-smelling raspberry.

Forty years ago there was a story being told, and being acted out, in the sunny Hammersmith lanes which we name vaguely—the story ended vaguely. The lovers, at least, were not married. One was then, and remained to be what we find her still—Miss Treherne.

The lover went, we do not yet say where. The girl lived on, and lived a very happy life—a life devoted in its later years to the three children of a spendthrift brother. She adopted those three girls. Two of them were married, one lived with her.

For the last year, in fact, she had been in a whirl of courtships and marriages, for besides those of the two nieces, there had also been the marriage of a young faraway cousin.

Aurora's father had died in France; by the habit of her life the girl had been French; she had come to Miss Treherne and there must have come with her at the same time a reawakening of some old life—perhaps of some old romance. We knew not. Anyway, she had become another child to the old lady. She had married well, and things "were well."

"Things were well" — these words summarise Miss Treherne's view of life. A happy woman—surely the most gentle, most gentle, most sweetly bright old lady

one can imagine. She was nearly sixty. Her hair was white, and she wore it in a fashion past the date of her youth, brushed back, and high. Her cap was just some old lace laid upon her white hair, and tied beneath her chin. Her dress was always black, for she knew the artistic beauty of black when worn by beautiful old age. She was in all things most womanly, even to the indulgence of the pleasant little vanities of womanhood.

It was a May evening. From the bow-window of her old house one could see the red flush of sunset rising above houses; then in a break where a new street led out westwards, there was more than the flush to be seen—just a grand crimson blaze lying upon the lap of the last of the meadows. The soft rosy light fell across Miss Treherne; she was sitting by the open window tying together a bunch of dark red roses and leaves. More roses and leaves were in a basket before her, more roses of the same sort hung round her deep bay window. She had been gathering those in her hands—what for?

There were signs about the old room that Miss Treherne did not live alone. There was old furniture—older than its owner by far, but there was a lovely little modern piano in black and gold, and by it was the comiest of padded basket-chairs, besides a good deal of bric-à-brac in the most modern fashion. Over the back of the chair was a creamy shawl of China silk and embroidery.

Miss Treherne had just brought it into the room, and had thrown it down. She did not look at all the sort of person who would need even such a wrap as that exquisite shawl on such a sunny, warm May night. No; one rather linked the idea of the shawl with the red roses, with a young girl, with youth, and with pleasure.

The door was a little ajar. From up and away—the old house ran low and long—there came the sound of a bit of song, then the same tune whistled softly, then again as the creator of the sounds ran down the staircase, the whistling changed back to singing.

"I'm late," cried a girl, hurrying in, "and Morris is later."

"Jannie dear!" Miss Treherne exclaimed, "the clocks are all too fast, I'm sure. Morris is as correct as the time at Greenwich!"

"Generally, aunt dear; but this is the exception that proves the rule. Thanks, over and over—what a lovely posy! Shall

I be too barbaric though—red roses and yellow ribbons?"

Janet Treherne rattled on gaily, and going up to a glass with her bunch of red roses, had certainly no air of rebelling against the supposed "barbarism." She was a fair girl—fair as her aunt had been—she wore an Indian muslin gown, all soft gathers and folds, and round her waist was tied a broad, soft sash of straw-coloured Indian silk; this was the yellow she had jestingly called "barbaric."

"No; it suits just exactly." She went on laying the mass of deep-hued blooms on her left shoulder; "I'm gradually acknowledging the fact, aunt dear, that I want colour. Yes—I want colour. I'm more satisfied with myself now. Shall I take to appearing in garments of purple and crimson, and— Ah! I might get up as a wood-nymph in russet-brown—an autumn wood-nymph, I mean!"

"I'll tell you when the autumn comes. Now I like the spring wood-nymph—it's a pity to my mind that all the daffodils are over."

The door-bell was heard ringing.

"Morris at last! And I am really to have the shawl—the shawl! Take care of my roses!"

Miss Treherne was robing the girl with the utmost care.

The door was opened, but no servant said:

"Morris with the fly, miss."

No; it was a very different appearance of things which greeted the eyes of Miss Treherne and Janet. The servant was visible certainly; but she held in her hand a basket filled with roses—all pale roses, tea and blush roses of fairest, faintest hues.

"For Miss Janet," the maid said.

"For me! How lovely! And who sent them? It is Aurora, I know! She asked me what I was going to wear."

"I don't think that, dear. She was talking about your dress to me—there, it is she who has made you imagine you want colour!—she said I must be sure you had red roses. We inspected those in the garden, or I should have got you some from Spears's."

"I should have been very angry if you had done that!" Janet cried, with her colour one degree heightened. "Fancy sending to Spears, and paying Spears's prices!"

"Please, miss," the maid was lingering, "the boy who brought these had 'Spears' on his box, miss! The basket was put very careful in the box."

"All right. Do see if Morris is coming." Then she turned to her aunt: "Who are they from, aunt?"

"How can I tell, dear? Do I know all your admirers?" the old lady said softly, with a merry twinkle in her grey eyes.

"Yes—every one of them!"

The merry look was still in Miss Treherne's eyes as she continued to look, without any purpose assuredly, into Janet's puzzled face.

Now the girl was as clear as the day, and to make the shadow of a reservation was, for her, a thing impossible. She had spoken truth, but that quiet laughing gaze of her aunt's made her remember something. She coloured rosy red.

"I shall not wear a stranger's flowers!" she cried.

"A stranger, Jannie? How so, if we both know him?"

"This is a stranger——" the girl spoke hesitatingly.

But only one idea was in Miss Treherne's mind: it was another of Janet's boy-lovers—only a boy-lover. Why should boys be hurt?

"I think I would wear them," said she—"some of them."

It was kindly thought for the "boy" which caused the words.

"They do look nice!" was Janet's cry.

So she wore the stranger's roses.

#### CHAPTER II.

JANET was standing—it was nearly time for her to leave—standing with a gentleman, no boy-lover.

Bernard Hill had just thanked her for wearing his roses. Something in his manner made a sudden change come over her. Instead of the sweet spring nymph he had compared her to, he saw a dignified, self-possessed maiden.

One meeting with her had settled his fate. Janet was, would ever be, the one woman in the world for Bernard Hill. But could he marry? He was one of a large family, he was only twenty-three years of age, and only a Lieutenant in Her Majesty's service. Nevertheless, he must speak.

Janet's words stopped him.

"I must go—I never keep aunt waiting."

"You have a tyrannical aunt?"

"Not quite."

Little more was said after that, and very

soon, being near the door, Janet signified her intention of slipping away.

"It is not one o'clock."

"It is less than ten minutes to the hour," was the light but firm answer. "And I see Maud Stacey there," and a quaint humility that looked very much like pride showed in Janet's manner. "I was a little angry with you just now, so I beg your forgiveness and if you grant it you must pack me off in charge of Morris."

"Morris?"

"My coachman—guardian—nurse," she laughed. Then she turned off towards her friend Maud.

That young lady was dismissing her companion, a man, say, sixty years of age. A juvenile man, nevertheless; also—here is an involuntary judgment of Janet's—a man whose handsome physique was spoiled by an ignoble expression.

"You may take her to the carriage, of course, Mr. Hill," Maud cried, "but I shall go with her to find her wraps. You can wait together—do not think I shall release you yet, Mr. ——"

Janet missed the name, but neither she nor anyone within a tolerably wide radius could miss the rejoinder, pitched in a high, clear voice.

"Miss Stacey," answered the young-old gentleman with that strikingly clear enunciation, "you misapply that word 'release.' Am I not in thrall until you return?"

"Janet," and Maud Stacey's hand was slipped under her friend's arm, "did you ever hear such idiotic nonsense? That fossil is one mass of vanity; he will not see when I am laughing at him."

"Who is he?"

"Oh, some offshoot of the Hills—uncle, or cousin, or grandfather for aught I know, of your friend Bernard Hill."

"Who is she?" the old gentleman was asking of the young one, and he stuck a gold eyeglass in his eye.

Bernard Hill knew well enough who was meant; but there is a point in a young man's experience when he resents some particular "she" being spoken of in such a cynical way as that in which the question had come to him.

"Who is who?" And he took up a rather lazy, careless manner.

"That ineffable air of insouciance is overdone, my dear nephew," was the somewhat sarcastic return. "There is but one 'she' here to-night, as you seem to be aware; and the little Stacey girl is an

inimitable foil for her. Have I seen her before, or is it that her beauty makes a charm for the Academy?"

"I suppose you mean Miss Treherne," Bernard answered haughtily. "No; no Academy boasts any picture of her!"

"Ah, the idea is desecration! Never mind, Bernard—never mind. I have been young myself. One must have a divinity to worship. Keep the adoration within bounds, though."

"I do not understand." Again the words were intensely haughty.

The elder man was, however, impatient of this. He waved his hand.

"Treherne! One of the Baynham Trehernes! Scarcely."

The young man cared not to answer. He saw Janet, and that was all he asked for the moment.

He led her past guests and servants, and then he began to speak.

"It was good of you to wear my roses."

"The goodness is not mine!"

"Whose, then?"

"Aunt's. I was dressed when they came. Aunt put them by the side of the red ones."

"Ah!"

Bernard was damped.

"She's the tyrannical aunt, mind. But she would not have liked any of the boys to be disappointed; she cannot bear anyone to be hurt."

"The boys?"

"My friends, I mean. Aunt's and my friends."

Janet was very cool.

"If I were but one of them!"

"Well, I suppose you easily might be. Aunt likes to see all my friends."

Then the carriage-door had to be shut.

### CHAPTER III.

BEFORE a week had run out Mr. Hill had twice called on Miss Treherne. On his first visit she had sighed at sight of him. He was no boy. She was thinking that Janet's sweet playtime of girlhood was well-nigh over.

The two had talked generalities—family generalities, and young Hill told all he had to tell. Miss Treherne, when he had gone, found he had left her with an idea that his father was much—everything, in fact—while of his mother she only remembered that she was an invalid.

It came to pass that Bernard Hill became much more in the house than any of "the

boys" had ever been. He showed himself a true, noble-souled man.

He was on leave, and yet a war was afoot. As he got no orders for active service he would volunteer. He was saying so much to Miss Treherne. Apropos of some junior he had ended hotly:

"He'll get his step, as sure as fate."

"But if he had been the one to be shot?" the old lady shuddered.

"That would have been a stroke of luck for the next sub."

"You men are foolhardy."

"Miss Treherne, 'Faint heart ne'er won fair lady,' and—and I want my 'faire ladye.' No more kicking of my heels in idleness. I know I have your permission. I am going to sit here for half an hour and worry you, and then I shall walk away and meet Janet. There, I've done it."

Old Miss Treherne's eyes had a misty light in them, and her smiling lips trembled a bit, nevertheless they smiled. How odd it was to see the colour rise in the young fellow's face as he made the slip and called Janet, "Janet."

"She is my Janet, Miss Treherne," he cried; "she must be my Janet, and waiting will not give her to me. I must fight for her. I am going to speak to her this afternoon."

"Dear, dear!" and the old lady struck her dimpled hands together. "Might it not be better to wait until you come back?"

"I cannot fight unless I fight for her."

Miss Treherne's heart glowed with pride in him. One more attempt, however.

"But unless she has the right love, would it not be better?" she ventured, knowing the shallowness of her words.

"You do not think that, Miss Treherne? You do not think that?"

"No, no; I do not," and she took one of his hands in hers. "She tries to hide it, but Jannie has the true love in her. Yes, you are right; it will be better for her to know;" then she let his hand drop from her grasp, and leaned back in her chair. "Now let us talk of something else," she said.

They tried this, but, naturally, they failed. Bernard soon got upon the subject of his next action—his volunteering. He might—he only hoped he should—get orders at once; he was ready.

"You must go home."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Yes, for an hour or two. My father will understand. How can I be out there where there is only one rest a day when I

might get orders at night to be at Portsmouth the next morning! And my mother, I do not think she ever said a regular good-bye when Bob went off to Queensland."

What could Miss Treherne say! A strange mother this!

"Your mother is an invalid!" she asked.

"Yes, rather so. But, Miss Treherne, we are odd folks—oddly constituted, I think. Five of us are like my father, and, I fancy, more like the rest of the world; mother and George are quite different. They say we have an exuberance of brotherly kindness, so they are obliged to take the affections coolly. Mother and an uncle of mine are alike, too. I have a sort of an idea that in their own generation they were just as dissimilar amongst their other brothers and sisters as George is to us."

"That is the uncle Jannie saw once at the Staceys'! She took a dislike to him—softly be that spoken."

"Yes, I know she did; and yet Uncle Bernard is a man generally popular."

Miss Treherne's softly-folded hands moved quickly, unclasped, then clasped together again so firmly, that the tips of the rounded knuckles became quite white.

Why should this change come to her? Had she some physical pain, or could the young man's words have touched a painful memory?

Yes, we have hinted at a love-story in the dim past. The hero of that had been no Bernard, but entanglements had grown from the presence of a man who was called Bernard.

We hope such a repetition of that name will not make our readers turn away. Can we help it if two generations shall each have held a man of the same name? One stroke of enlightenment—mind you, Miss Treherne did not know this—these Bernards were uncle and nephew: one Bernard Hill, and the old one, Bernard Wilson.

We can only again notice Miss Treherne's agitation. Some few seconds passed before she could speak naturally and lightly; her young companion's thoughts were happily engrossed by his own affairs.

"You have an uncle Bernard?" was her seemingly pointless remark.

"Yes, my mother's brother, Bernard Wilson." Here young Hill, having risen and taken up his hat, was half through the doorway. "I shall not say good-bye," he said. "I—we shall be back soon." He ran off.

He had not seen that Miss Treherne's

head was bowed. So it remained bowed long after he had gone. Her hands were clasped in agony; something had vivified an agony that forty years ago had well-nigh killed her. And the wearing of those forty years had never worn out some power in Mary Treherne's heart.

A thrush's song broke the stillness—a thrush had been singing forty years ago, when a scene of a little lovers' quarrel had been magnified by some third person—some wily, soft-worded person.

Mary Treherne had cut herself away from many things, but she could never forget the burst of the thrush's song. Was her Janet's Bernard Hill the nephew of the man who had spoilt her young life?

Even so.

#### CHAPTER IV.

JANET'S love-story travelled happily on its course. Uncle George, the owner of Baynham, would have Bernard go down there, but at last Bernard got his wish—he was ordered off to Egypt.

Many welcoming letters came to Janet from the Hills, one from Bernard Wilson.

That letter hurt Miss Treherne. Janet herself called it a "false letter." She knew nothing of the old story; it was simply her own innate truth in revolt against the evil spirit of the man.

At the end Bernard's departure was hurried. And after that, can you not well imagine how Janet read the papers, and how the war news became the one sort of news for her?

After a time the two went to May in Suffolk, and from there they travelled north to Scotland, and for their first visit to the cousin Aurora and her husband at Fairloch Castle.

The place was full of gay people for the shooting.

Superstition has her home in the north. And was it a good or a bad omen for Janet, that she had no sooner looked round her bedroom after her arrival, than Aurora brought her in a letter which had been forwarded to her?

The letter was only a scrap, written on a torn bit of paper:

"We are in for a battle, the biggest thing yet——"

Janet's face flushed. She had missed newspapers for a day or two at one time; she did not know that it had been through the purposeful planning of her friends that she did not know the details of a

battle which now Bernard's letter told her must be fought.

"He must have been wrong," was her cry.

"How? What?"

"He says they expect a battle."

Aurora looked at Miss Treherne, and Miss Treherne looked at Aurora. Both faces had one expression of anxiety upon them.

"You knew this, and you have kept me in ignorance?" Janet cried.—"And the telegrams must have been here ages ago!"

"You knew, dear, there had been a victory?" her aunt began.

"I knew there had been a successful skirmish—I heard that. But I heard of no great battle. There has been one!"

She was only dealing with two tender-hearted women; their faces spoke though their tongues kept silence.

"There has—and Bernard?"

"It was a great victory."

"And I not to be told of it! Then Bernard is——" She could not say the word.

"She should know," Aurora declared. "I should have told her at once. He is wounded, Janet dear——"

"And I not to know!"

"Slightly. That is what the papers say," Aurora was still the speaker. "There will be news again to-morrow, surely—only 'slightly,' dear. Do not think worse than that;" she slipped her hand within Janet's arm.

And Janet just let her do with her as she liked. She took her caress, making no rebellion. Then some unspoken decision braced her, and she kissed Aurora, gave her a little push away from her, and began quietly to take off her travelling things, Miss Treherne, poor soul! looking on in loving helplessness.

"You will show me the paper—yes, aunt, I know you have it stowed away somewhere out of my way—give it me, there's a dear!"

The old lady disappeared. She certainly had kept the paper; but, to tell the truth, she was full of fear, and she could not look as brave as Janet did. Ah me! she had been brave enough in her youth—now she could not keep her eyes dry, or her voice firm, as she did once.

"There will be more news to-morrow, Aurora! You say that!"

"There must be—surely. Do we not look every day, Janet—for your sake!"

Now Aurora Lady Welford was a

sonage who was mostly dignified; here, with her sad-faced Janet, she was only sweet and tender. It was a new thing for Janet to be sad-faced.

Then the morrow's papers brought good news.

"All the wounded are doing well. No more casualties," said the telegram.

Surely, if the first news bore the shadow of a bad omen, here was the sunshine lifting the shadow.

Janet Treherne's bright spirit bore her bravely on. It was not in her to meet troubles half-way. The house was a charming one; there were nice folks staying in it; more than one Janet knew of old, and Lord Welford had done his utmost to ease her one trouble. He had written to a War Office friend, so that if any chance of additional news could be forthcoming Janet should have it. There was no more news, and the girl rested her soul on that last telegram—"All the wounded doing well."

Some visitors left, and some more came down.

Two points now have to be seized here because they touched Janet. The first is this: a young Scotch laird had most unmistakably lost his heart to her; he was told she was "engaged," but he would not see his folly. So much for point number one. The second was this: amongst the new comers was Bernard Wilson. He was a bachelor friend of Lord Welford's, and it was not the first visit he had paid to Fairlooh Castle.

We must pass over any details of the meeting between him and Miss Treherne. When a woman, such as Miss Treherne was, knows that a meeting of this sort is impending, she can prepare herself. She can be always ready, so to speak, in the continual daily after-encounters. Nay; what woman of any right pride wears her heart upon her sleeve, or, amongst such a gay party as Fairlooh Castle held, would exhibit by her manner any desire to shun any one of her fellow-guests?

And what had happened was all forty years ago, and forty years is a long while. But, to explain what comes after, we must allow ourselves one word concerning the effect of this meeting upon the two. Miss Treherne had lived happily through the forty years. She did not forget, never would forget—nay, her nieces little thought how the bright old lady was capable of going to her grave



still, with all this being true, the very custom of her life helped her to bear this untoward meeting calmly. More than that, it never at all upset her quiet thoughts or the restfulness of her memories.

Bernard Wilson was a different character. He was not a noble character—so ignoble, in fact, that we do not care to analyse him. He knew that in the past he had done wrong to Miss Treherne, perhaps from a mean jealousy, perhaps from some other reason as pitiful; and now, meeting her again, he took a violent and bitter hatred against her. A cowardly soul would hate the creature it had injured. However, he was a man of the world, and he spoke lightly to her; he even touched, with an ease which was all his own, the old acquaintance-ship; after that he was the most airy, most gay, most pleasantly genial of all the masculine guests.

And the days ran on.

They called the place a shooting-box, but a shooting-box in the Inverness country may be a good-sized mansion. Heather-covered hills rose about it; the Spey sparkled through the grounds, and then, in one of its many windings, was found miles away, a full stream, with a glen rising wild and gorgeous in the autumn bravery above it.

There was to be an excursion to this glen—an excursion for the young people. Naturally, the elder ones would not go where climbing must make half the fun.

The young folks started, two of the elders found themselves together. Bernard Wilson had made a "chance" of being with Miss Treherne.

"Do you know," he said carelessly, "how cholera is raging? You must know it; I cannot force the knowledge on your niece."

Miss Treherne trembled.

"It is not at X——," naming the place where Bernard was.

Mr. Wilson stroked his white moustache.

"It has reached there," he said.

"Do you mean—Bernard?"

"I mean nothing definite. I have no letters; there are only the papers."

By-and-by the postman came.

#### CHAPTER V.

GLEN MALLOCH was reached. Autumn mists had been rife, but they had, for the morning, cleared off, and sunshine, with a brisk wind, made all things charming.

A heather-covered moor to the south glowed ruddy; the trees wore a million brilliancies of colour; the rowan-trees were sporting, some of them, a scarlet patch of young berries. What could be asked for more lovely than Nature had given?

One's spirits answered blithely to the gay day. Janet was as gay as the rest. Why not, when news was good?

She, Nell Gavill, and the laird were together. Poor Nell Gavill! Janet's charms were robbing her of her admirer. But Nell was a brave girl; she hid her little smart.

They—the girls—were bent upon going out of the usual course. They would cross the head of the fall and come down on the far side. What did they think of torn skirts in their wild gaiety, or of possible slippings into pools? Angus Brown—Brown, of Kilboehrie, to give him his title—tried to stop them, but it was of no use. He had to obey, and, in his obedience, to lead them.

They were safe across the high upper ground. Clambering down the rough, very rough farther side, Janet was always first. She was a very spirit of gaiety that morning. Her light foot danced from crag to crag, her trim, slim figure never was seen to hesitate, as she skimmed through the tangle of greenery. She never yet had made a false step.

But the laird was above her, and he saw what she did not see—a crag right ahead of her that was resting on nothing, so to speak.

There the girl went, skimming lightly and freely through the underwood. Her foot would be on that tottering crag the next moment!

Nell gave a shrill scream—she saw it all—she saw Janet spring from the underwood; she saw the laird fly after her—what next?

Another cry broke from her, this time it was a smothered cry, and for a second or two she stood up there, like a figure suddenly turned to stone. There was no wild fun then in her eyes. No; her face took a change, a change almost like that from life to death. And why? Because she found in that moment that she had been, as one might say, playing with edged tools, in what she had fancied was playing at love; she saw Angus Brown's face, she saw upon it some new sort of frenzy!

Love for Janet?—was it that?

Yes; girls do not reason at such times; yes, it was that! Then involuntarily she had uttered that smothered cry.

Janet's foot had touched the tottering stone, barely touched it, and with a light spring she had landed beyond it on a bank of moss. The stone had crashed, and leapt, and splashed down into the chasm of rushing water. The laird stood white, silent, helpless for the one second.

Then Janet, too, read the story of his face—read it with dismay.

Oh, this foolish game of playing at love! Had she not her real love, and what had she done that she could have let this man think of her in that way?

This again was all over in the second. After that she was the first to seize the need of the time; she grasped the whole business—she called out for Nell to hurry, and she took up her own manner of wild gaiety. Perhaps, the gaiety might be just a little forced, had anyone been by who could think of criticising either it or Janet.

Her companions were in no humour for criticism.

"Nell, did you see?" Janet cried as the other came down.

"I did."

Nell's face was grave, but Janet only supposed it was from the terror she had given her.

Nell could not say more than just that sober, "I did."

"And that stone might have been me—or I might have been it! Ugh! how the thing went bumping and scratching down!"

"I could not have saved you," gasped the laird.

"You?—no!" She tried to look at him and to make herself believe that—that he was still Nell's and her play-lover, but it would not do. "Let us get back to the others. Have they seen us—seen my exploit, do you think?"

Her voice strengthened as she ended.

"No; they have evidently all gone down."

"I wish I had never come, Nell."

Janet drew back, letting Brown stride across bracken, and grass, and crags in front of them.

"It has been an experience!"

And Nell then began to walk on, and she pulled a bunch of rowan-berries from over her head.

Of course the story made quite an excitement, and more than enough was made out of it. Nevertheless, one point of it

was never made public. Perhaps many stories suffer in this way.

#### CHAPTER VI.

THE letters had come in.

Immediately after reading his, Bernard Wilson had again gone to Miss Treherne, and had told her that his fears were confirmed. His nephew was down with cholera, and could not live. He had heard from his commanding-officer.

"Break the news to Janet," he ended. "I cannot see her—in fact, I must be off to London immediately. Bernard is more to me than you imagine—can I rest here, so far off? I will telegraph if I find better news. Now I must see Welford and make my adieux."

We must leave Miss Treherne. We can only say that she went to Aurora. The two women together might help each other, but how to help Janet?

Mr. Wilson went on his way, and his traps were sent off to the railway-station. By a freak which seemed caused by a chance word of Sir William Gavill's, Mr. Wilson would walk that short distance.

"It is but a stone's-throw!" he cried in his jaunty way. "Enough of carriages in the next twenty-four hours, my good friend! Let me get a tramp while I can!" And with this he had passed his hand through Sir William's arm.

Now this Sir William Gavill was a very different kind of man to Bernard Wilson, and out of all the diverging points of character there stood but one which could make a link between the two men. Here it is.

They were well out of the Fairloch grounds when this exclamation burst from Wilson:

"Young fool!"

"You are complimentary to Miss Janet!" was the answer. Sir William could be brusque.

"Bah!"

"Nell is well enough for me"—this was the gentleman's style when he was alone with his fellow-man. By-and-by, in the drawing-room, he would hide it. Perhaps one excuse for Sir William was that he had been widowed ever since his one child was born. His married life had not been wholly satisfactory; his child had been brought up by his sisters away from him; he had very little womanly influence about him. He was an Indian civilian.

wealthy and retired—"but she's not a patch on the little Treherne girl."

"You do not know what you are talking of! One is dark and one is fair, and if the Treherne owns a few more inches, what of that! Do we measure beauty by the yard!"

This very refined Bernard Wilson could drop his refinement.

"Well, I'm not going to quarrel over the business—that's a fact, Wilson. If the captain had liked my maid—well and good. She has only seen him once, so she cannot grieve; if the old maids have brought her up strictly, they have at least kept any such plotting as this of ours out of her imagination. Aye, and she'll get no inkling of it from me, man."

Mr. Wilson moved a plaid from one shoulder to the other—he made no remark.

"Drop it, old fellow," came after a silent walk of some half-dozen steps or so.

"Ha! Drop what?" Mr. Wilson's face bore literally no expression.

"This matchmaking of yours."

"Is it my custom ever to drop what I take in hand? You have known me a few years, Gavill."

"I have; and we are going downhill pretty fast now, I'm thinking. Was my bag yesterday anything like any one of the bags I made last year?"

"Phew! Whose is? Half the birds are killed by the rains. But young Bernard may be home yet in time to secure Nell if the laird only takes advantage of my move."

"Bernard home! Your move! Is he so bad as to be ordered home?"

"My good fellow, have I not been hurried off like this in the fear that I may be nephewless—heirless?"

Wilson's handsome old face was a mask of innocence and veracity—sinner that he was!

"I don't understand you," Sir William grunted. "Do you owe Miss Treherne a grudge?"

Wilson shrugged his shoulders.

"No!" Gavill stood still. "Does she know?"

"She knows nothing, and I do not mean that she shall. I to reward her? Bah! let that nonsense pass; we will stick to my present project, if you please. Young Bernard shall have my cash—you know quite as much about my banker's book as I do—if he marries Miss Helen Gavill." Some unusual excitement flushed Mr. Wilson's face, and he then pulled up on the road-

way. "Nothing like time present, though. I'm good for another twenty years, I hope. Still, let's make a will. Here is paper, and here is a pencil. Now, 'I, Bernard Wilson, leave all my property to my nephew, Bernard Hill. Bah! the paper will not hold out for the condition."

"Take it for granted; it is only a rough draft," said the other, humouring him.

Men who knew Bernard Wilson, knew they never changed his will and pleasure.

"No; that's true. Nevertheless, we'll sign and witness the document." Here he made his well-known clear signature. "Now your fiat below."

"Come, this is tragic! out on a lonely road, no man visible——"

"Don't talk."

Evidently Mr. Wilson could do business, though he could at times be so airily light. Gavill signed.

Then the small piece of paper, which was in truth just a piece of Indian paper, and one of poor Bernard's envelopes turned inside out, was folded neatly together. Next Mr. Wilson took out his watch, fitted the paper neatly within the case of it, then, a little click, and marched onward again for the train.

#### CHAPTER VII.

YOU must imagine Janet's restlessness. If only she could have gone away from Fairloch! She longed as she had never longed before for the old Kensington home; there were the well-known streets, the hourly posts, the short drive if need were to the Horse Guards—verily, the Horse Guards seemed to her the one haven where her soul could find rest!

But they kept her at Fairloch. One reason, and one reason only, would she see out of the many they put before her. Mr. Wilson would telegraph directly he got to town.

Her senses would not take in the exact form of his promise—"he would telegraph if the news were good news."

No telegram came.

And at last Janet was made to see—whose mouth spoke the words we cannot say. When she did hear that it was believed that her lover was dead, she wrote herself to Mr. Wilson. You see she was a girl of decision and of independence, and her letter was posted before anyone knew that she intended writing it.

In due time she got her answer. It came

with a black-edged border and—really, Mr. Wilson had not studied the art of letter-writing—it neither said “yes” nor “no” to her questions. In a vague exuberance of sorrowful expressions it led her to believe that her lover was dead.

A week went by from the day on which Mr. Wilson had left.

Sir William Gavill had gone farther north to another friend’s moor; Nell was left behind, and Nell was Janet’s friend.

As for the laird, he was a gentleman, and a gentleman knows when to be silent—knows, too, when defeat is irretrievable; and Angus Brown lifted his head and bore his defeat bravely. The heart of a Scotsman is loyal and true, but it can wisely collect its forces, and calmly prepare for other battles than the past ones. Angus was too good a man not to have the stuff in him to win a victory in the end; such a skirmish as this would make him a wiser man.

In the midst of it all a strange thing happened. A letter came for Janet, dated “Alexandria.” It was from Bernard, and it said that his wound was troublesome, and they had ordered him home with the next invalided party.

What was the date? He had never put one. What had been the date of Mr. Wilson’s news? Had this letter been delayed?

No answer could be given by anyone.

Another day had to go by.

And when that other day came it brought no letter of satisfaction for Janet. Crowds of letters came for everybody else, it seemed, but none for her. How everyone read their letters, and how the very secondary packets of newspapers were disregarded!

“Open some of them, aunt dear,” was Aurora’s cry. “Let us hear what quarter of the world they come from. I should like a French one.”

“Here it is, then;” and Janet undid a string.

“Two from Australia,” began old Miss Treherne.

She had not her spectacles on, and she looked at no address. The packets lay between her plate and Lord Welford’s.

“Those are Wilson’s,” said that gentleman, tearing open the envelope of his third letter.

“A wonderful fellow, that brother of his,” said a certain Mr. Molyneux.

Miss Treherne had dropped the packets. Rather strangely, too, she leaned back in her chair and only the moment before she

had been so gay and merry over the opening of the newspapers.

“Is he the David Wilson?” said a lady.

“Yes; the authority on——”

Lord Welford was talking and reading his letter at the same time.

“The authority for everything of Australian politics, my friend.” Mr. Molyneux was offhand. “I am sure those papers must be public property. I should like to know if he comes on the—— question. He is the only man fit to send over.”

How all this struck into Miss Treherne’s brain! Did she know where she was? Did she remember that forty years ago she and this same David Wilson had been lovers? Did she at all think of him, or of herself, as they both were now, when the forty years had whitened the heads of each one?

She only knew one thing—that she and he had been lovers forty years ago.

She went away from the breakfast-table.

At last a London newspaper came to be opened. How events were thickening, and hurrying, and crowding! What that newspaper told had best be given in the paper’s own words:

“FATAL ACCIDENT.—During the heavy rain which deluged the metropolis between the hours of three and four yesterday afternoon, a melancholy occurrence happened. One of the few pedestrians who were venturing along was a gentleman who had walked up from the Horse Guards to Charing Cross. While in the act of crossing that thoroughfare he fell. It must be supposed that the sea of mud and water, through which he had to wade, covered something which made his footing insecure, for his bearing up to the moment of his fall had been singularly alert for a man of his years. In his fall his head struck a passing waggon, and death must have been instantaneous. He was at once conveyed to Charing Cross Hospital, where, we believe, friends soon identified him. He was a Mr. Bernard Wilson.”

No need for us to reproduce the excitement which at once burst around the table.

Was this report true?

Yes. Lord Welford would not wait for the slowness of letter-writing, but telegraphed at once to town. Was it likely that he could be content with only general news of this sort, when it concerned a man who but a few hours ago, as one might say, had been his guest?

It was all quite true.

And this place will do as well as any

other, to give the one final touch to Bernard Wilson's life. Are we harsh in saying that the good he had not sought for others in life came to them by his death? His will was just that scrap of paper which he wrote, as we have described, with Sir William Gavill on the very day he left Fairloch Castle.

And all his wealth—it was of no mean amount—went to his nephew, Bernard Hill.

But Bernard was dead, or—dying?

He was nothing of the sort—he was on his way home, invalided.

Janet's letter had been the true one, and the colouring which the unhappy plotter, his uncle, had put upon affairs, had been just a colouring akin to the facts of the war, but facts outside of which Captain Hill now stood.

But let the plotting pass. There would be no more of it.

Henceforth let our story think only of the sunshine it holds. Like autumn days that are bright, the glow about our ending would like to show itself in its most radiant loveliness and splendour.

Miss Treherne and Janet travelled home as quickly as might be to the dear old Kensington house.

When Bernard came to it there had come the grand flooding of what looks like a second summer. The air was warm, the sun poured in through the open window, roses were still hanging their pink heads from the trellis at the side. Janet was waiting for him.

Did they talk of the gift of roses that once had come to her?

Bernard was just enough of an invalid by that time to be comfortably looked after by Miss Treherne—the old lady was very glad at heart.

Before the winter set in there was a wedding, and Janet went away.

How lonely for old Miss Treherne!

Dear, dear! Was that sweet and genial lady ever lonely? Could she dream of being lonely now, though her children had all left her, and she lived with only her maids in the old house?

Such a word as "loneliness" never was dreamt of by her. Indeed, no! Her heart was full of the gladness of her youth—what were forty years when they were bridged by such a hand-grasp as the days were bringing to her!

David Wilson was coming home.

## LENT LILIES.

By SUSAN K. PHILLIPS.

AYE, it is over high for me to climb,  
Three hundred steps up to the Church-garth  
Head;

I say each year I hear the Easter chime,  
"Next time the mools will lie above my head."  
An' yet, for all I've seen my eightieth year,  
This bonnie morning finds me tottering here.

For I is loth that any other hand,  
But mine should tend the lily-bed, you see;  
For we were mates together on the land,  
An' mates on ship-board allis, him an' me;  
I likes to think he doesn't lie so deep,  
But he can listen—just to hear me creep

Up to his headstone where the lilies blow,  
An' stand beside him while the church-bells  
ring.

Who was he? Why, it happened long ago,  
An' folks forget so; it's a curious thing,  
What I did yesterday seems far an' dim,  
But I can mind all that, that chanced to him.

He sailed—let's see, it's sixty year ago—  
In the barque Lecta, bound for Elsinore,  
An' I was vext that he took ship alone,  
While I was down wi' fever, here ashore;  
But he says, "Mate, I've need to keep my word,  
An' we shook hands, an' so he went aboard.

The master was a strange an' reckless man,  
He'd sit an' gloom for hours by the helm;  
An' when the hands were merry o'er the can,  
He'd glower as he'd fain ha' silenced them;  
An' when he'd keep the watch, in all the barque,  
None cared to stand aside him in the dark.

It was a Friday when the Lecta lay,  
Safe back in Whitby Roads, an' sailors know  
They must not make a port on such a day,  
Not though the winds moan and the glass run  
low;

Better ride out the wildest gale, they say,  
Than on Black Friday try to make the Bay.

But little recked old Sam of fust or bode,  
He bade up anchor an' to fetch the port.  
The men stood by the cable where she rode,  
An' moved with sullen foot, an' answered short  
One man stood out to cross the master's will,  
One man alone, an' he my mate, our Bill.

How do I know it all? Well, wait a bit,  
I can't do to be harassed in a yarn;  
It's too much hurry ends in little wit,  
'Mid youngsters who can't tell thee stem frer  
starn.

Didn't old Sam come drifting safe ashore,  
An' tell us all the log from Elsinore?

He said our Bill stood up amid the crew,  
An' darred him to bring ruin on the lot.  
Rough as he was, he gave the lad his due,  
An' to his death he never quite forgot,  
How he had thrust him back with heavy hand,  
An' seized the helm, an' put her straight for land.

O' course she struck, out by the Black Nab yonder.  
An' parted amidsthips, an' one wild cry  
Rang through the breakers' deep unceasing thunder,  
An' told its story to the darkening sky;  
Old Sam made Saltwick, floating on a spar,  
But all the rest lie drowned by the Scar.

All but my mate—give us a light—the tale  
Sounds queer, they say; but them as knows the  
coast,  
Knows, too, of things to make their cheeks grow  
pale,

Who of their land-larnt wisdom loudest boast;  
I say, who knows it, sin' that fatal night  
Never a barque won past the Nab aright.

Something in loudest weather went across,  
A squall, a current, or a sudden wave;  
Till what with strange ill-luck, or wreck, or loss,  
A nameless fear that nigh turned back the brave,  
An' made the coward useless—haunted like—  
The Nab that saw the Lecta drift an' strike.

An' soon a story grew, how when the bells  
Rang out on Sabbath morns, a flitting shape  
Glided where the white surf for ever swells,  
An' the great Nab shows like a rocky cape;  
An' pointed downwards with a shadowy hand,  
Where clinging weeds an' boulders strew the sand.

I an' some more young chaps went out to watch;  
The April day was rising sweet an' fair,  
We saw the Scar the sun's first glitter catch,  
We saw the Point, we saw the figure there;  
An' as I looked I felt my heart stand still,  
For in that awful thing I knew our Bill.

I loved the lad. I'd had to do a deal  
To keep hands off old Sam, an' when I saw  
The poor hand motion dumb, I seemed to feel  
All that he wanted; that he meant to draw  
Me on to do his work, an' like a shock  
It came to me—he lay beneath the rock.

So next ebb-tide I found a chap as darred  
Heave with me at the boulders, one by one;  
An' there we found him, lying torn an' scarred  
By wash of waves, an' crash of shell an' stone.  
But the old smile still showed as thof' it met,  
The mate who strove to do his bidding yet.

We laid him in the Church-garth on the Head  
With April sunshine dazzling on his grave,  
An' a strange sort o' sigh, some old folk said,  
Went waiving out between the wind an' wave;  
It might ha' been—I cannot justly say—  
The devil moaned the curse wer' put away,

Sin' he who did his best to right a wrong,  
Had fund at last a grave the parson blessed;  
My yarn has been above a bit too long.  
I planted them Lent-lilies by his rest;  
For all you young 'uns grow so wise, 'twere well  
To mind the warning that they bloom to tell.

For all that your black screaming steam can do,  
For all your charts to track the ocean way,  
There's not a barque but has a cause to rue,  
Who on Black Friday ventures from the Bay.  
Yet sin' our Bill lay safe in hallowed earth,  
No need to give the Nab so wide a berth.

## "AND THE PRINCE WHO CAME."

By B. DEMPSTER.

### CHAPTER I.

"It's positively enough to make a man go and hang himself, Trevor! Just read that."

Young James Goldsmith of the —th Regiment flung the letter he had just been reading across the table to his friend, Captain Trevor.

Captain Trevor took it and glanced through it, handing it back silently to his friend.

"What do you make of it?" again exclaimed his friend with intense irritation.

Captain Trevor took the cigar from his mouth and backed off the end.

"I make of it that your good aunt is extremely irate at the idea of a niece-in-law, particularly one connected so nearly with Lady Bellairs," he said calmly.

The younger man's face flushed indignantly.

"How on earth was I to know that my aunt knew Lady Bellairs, and hated her? Oh, by-the-bye, Trevor, I ought to apologise for that remark about you. I was in such a rage about the letter, that I did not think about it when——"

"Oh, it doesn't matter at all," said his friend with cool unconcern. "Miss Goldsmith's mind was evidently disturbed."

"But she needn't have insulted you. Besides, you are not the guardian of my morals."

"No, certainly—what there are to take care of. Whether in this case——"

"Hang it, Trevor!" exclaimed Goldsmith indignantly, "it is not a case of morals to fall in love with the loveliest and truest girl on the face of the earth. It is a——"

"Matter of principle—same thing; and perhaps, as your aunt has had all the bother and trouble of bringing up so unsatisfactory a creature as yourself, she might like to see you marry someone not connected with 'an old hag.' Is not that the expression she uses concerning Lady Bellairs?"

"Yes. A woman ought to be ashamed of herself for speaking of another like that."

"But I'm not sure she's not right."

"Well, if she is, she has no right to threaten to cut me off with a shilling because Lady Bellairs's granddaughter happens to be just the——"

His friend raised his hand as if to stop a flood of admiring adjectives.

"My aunt's a great deal too fond of expressing her opinions when they are disagreeable," went on the other, still intensely aggrieved. "Abusing my friend!"

"She only said I was a bigger fool than I looked, for not keeping you out of Lady Bellairs's clutches. I assure you I didn't mind it at all. It only shows that there was a time when she thought better of me."

"Do talk sense, for goodness sake, Trevor! You make me wild between you. What am I to do if aunt takes this in earnest, and really casts me adrift?"

Captain Trevor looked intently at his friend's pale, troubled face. Then he flung away the end of his cigar, and moved his chair a little back from the table.

"And you really mean to marry Miss Bellairs!" he said thoughtfully, still watching his friend.

"Of course I do, if she will have me; but if my aunt has written to Lady Bellairs, as she says she means to do, and has told her what she tells me, it is all up. For Lady Bellairs keeps Clarice under her thumb to such an extent——"

"If a girl's worth having, she will not yield to another where love is concerned."

"That's all rubbish, Trevor! You don't know anything about girls and what they have to go through sometimes; and I'm sure—Clarice"—the faint hesitation before the mention of the girl's name gave it a tenderer and more significant tone. Captain Trevor noticed that, and reflected on it, as his friend went on speaking—"must have had a bad time of it, shut up with that horrid old hag!"

"Don't call names," said his friend in parenthesis. "Yet she looks bright and happy enough."

"Yes; because she has known no other life but—— I say, I am afraid it's awfully mean of me;" the young man's face flushed a little, as he went on contritely. "But I can't help feeling glad that the old woman heard that the regiment was a poor one, and that I was the only man who had the promise of money. For if she had let the girl meet all the men, you know, at tennis and dances, she might have seen——"

"You mean it wouldn't have been such easy running for yourself, old fellow? Yes, it was mean of you."

"I know it was. But there, if you care for a girl, you don't seem to mind much what you do. And I think there is something else—a little more decent feeling, you know. Somehow the thought of all the men of a regiment dangling about a girl brought up in such a strict, nun-like life as hers has been makes one mad. You know what they are—flirting with every girl."

"But I don't think they would have flirted with her. She would not have let them."

"You're right, Trevor. She's—but you'll see better what she is to-morrow. I'm awfully glad I got you that invitation. You will have an awful dinner, for the old lady is a positive skinflint. I have seen Miss Bellairs blush when the three potatoes are handed round—one for each. But you won't mind that."

"I'll try not to. But I like potatoes."

"Then," began Goldsmith abruptly

again, "there is always the chance that Clarice herself may not care for——"

He did not finish the sentence, mixing himself some more toddy instead; but his face turned so pale that it was not difficult for his friend, still watching him with that keen look, to finish it for him.

Two months ago the regiment had come to this little country town. At one of the houses Trevor and Goldsmith had met an old lady who lived with her granddaughter a straggly secluded life on the outskirts of the town. Whether it was poverty, or meanness, or both combined, or a fear that the granddaughter, growing up, should meet any ineligible match, Lady Bellairs accepted scarcely any invitations, and rarely ever received any visitors inside her house. Her stinginess, her grasping hardness, her almost ludicrous pride in herself and her family had gained her rather an unpleasant reputation, though the fact of her belonging to so good a family, even though so very much reduced in circumstances that Lady Bellairs was glad to make money by turning to account all sorts of things, from the eggs her chickens laid, upwards, gave her a standing in the county.

It was on the occasion of one of the rare visits she paid that she met young Goldsmith and his friend Captain Trevor. To the astonishment of everyone in the room, she suddenly displayed a most unusual affability to the former young man, talked to him volubly all the time, allowed him to see her into the ramshackle old chaise, which went by the name of the "tub" in the neighbourhood, and which was always engaged by Lady Bellairs to carry her out on her visiting expeditions, and wound up by asking him to call. Of his friend she took no notice.

The most curious part of the matter, perhaps, considering what a spoilt, fastidious young man Goldsmith was, was that he did go and call, unless, of course, this fact could be explained by another, which had kept the two young men staring for ten minutes the day before over the hedge of a garden just outside the town.

They had been returning from a country walk, and had caught sight of a figure standing on the doorstep of the grey, weather-stained old house which was occupied by Lady Bellairs.

Subsequent enquiries had revealed to them that the girl on the doorstep was Lady Bellairs's granddaughter, while

great deal of intelligence had been added as to the lonely life the girl must lead, and to the evident intentions of her grandmother to keep her shut up till she could sell her to the highest bidder.

This visit was only the first one. Goldsmith had become a constant visitor at The Croft, as Lady Bellairs's residence was designated, and had been compelled to listen to much chaff from his brother officers in consequence.

If there had ever been any doubt as to the displeasing old lady's motives for receiving him, this letter from Miss Goldsmith certainly explained them to Goldsmith and Trevor.

It told them that Lady Bellairs and Miss Goldsmith—James Goldsmith's great-aunt—were acquainted, and that by this means Lady Bellairs must know that Miss Goldsmith was very highly connected, enormously wealthy, and had only one near relation—the great-nephew she had brought up with the idea of his inheriting her fortune. Of Miss Goldsmith's intense dislike to herself she probably knew nothing, or at any rate had thought, if it had previously existed, that it must have burnt itself out during the long lapse of years which had passed since they had met.

The thoughts raised by Miss Goldsmith's letter were so serious, that neither of the young men spoke for a little after that last speech of Goldsmith's. Both their faces were very grave as they sat smoking their second cigar. Goldsmith's was pale still with the pain and fear of that last thought of his, and Captain Trevor's knitted brow as he sat there pondering over his friend's affairs, gave rather a careworn look to his own face. But he jumped up at last, glancing at a clock over the untidy mantelpiece, order not being one of his friend's accomplishments. It was time for him to go on duty.

"Well," he said as he settled his cap, "at any rate, you have the night to sleep over it. You haven't got to make up your mind this moment between your aunt's fortune and Miss Bellairs."

"I'd decide this very moment if I were free," exclaimed Goldsmith impatiently, as he rose too; "but I'm convinced now, since I got that letter, that that fortune is the only chance for my life's happiness."

"Poor old fellow!" said his friend kindly; "but don't be angry with her. I suspected it all along. She is an old—what did your aunt call her? Something about and to the point."

"I say, don't! I know she's a beast, but somehow, when I think of Clarice, I hate to hear the old thing called names. After all, she is her relation."

"One consolation—she won't be your mother-in-law."

"Can't you stop chaffing for once in your life, Trevor? If you only felt as bad as I do! How thankful you ought to feel that you aren't cursed with a fortune!"

"It is a blessing, certainly," answered his friend after a second's pause, "especially when it is evidently considered the best part of yourself."

With which parting speech he retreated to the door, leaving his friend venting his annoyance and wounded feelings in language, forcible, if not polite.

## CHAPTER II.

IT was about half-past six the next day, when the two young men drove up in Goldsmith's trap to the sun-blistered door of Lady Bellairs's house. The weed-disfigured drive and daisy-starred lawn gave some notion of the economical principles upon which the management of the place was formed.

Trevor thought he had never seen such a tangled, miserable place, with its broken palings, its unpruned trees and shrubs, its untidy paths; and the house certainly did not present a much more inviting appearance. There was not a muslin curtain to be seen anywhere. Nothing but hideous green Venetian blinds, much the worse for want of paint; and, as he thought of the girl who spent her lonely days there, he muttered something very uncomplimentary to the hostess whose dinner they were going to eat. But he did not express his feelings aloud for fear of adding to the depression of his friend, who had been in the most miserable spirits all day at the thought of his great-aunt, and of the probability of Lady Bellairs having received a similar letter to his own.

An untidy-looking maid received them, and the trap was sent back to the town with Goldsmith's groom, Goldsmith having learnt that, though willing to receive him on occasions at her table, Lady Bellairs had no intention of putting up his horse and trap, so he generally made a point of walking home. The two young men were ushered into the drawing-room where Lady Bellairs and her granddaughter awaited them.



Goldsmith's first glance told him that something had gone wrong. He immediately guessed what, but he put a good face on the matter, and shook hands in a frank, cordial fashion, as if he had not noticed the freezing dignity of Lady Bellairs's manner.

"This is my friend Captain Trevor," he said, presenting his friend.

Lady Bellairs held out her hand grimly, scarcely allowing her long fingers to rest for a second in the young man's hand.

They were such cold, uncomfortable fingers that he was quite glad to let them drop, though he looked rather curiously at Lady Bellairs as Goldsmith greeted the granddaughter a few steps off.

She was a tall, slight woman, with a bend in her shoulders which made them almost round. She looked much younger than her years, and had a thin, sharp face, whose features betrayed something still of the beauty for which she had once been famous, though her nose was red at the tip, and her thin lips were disagreeable to superciliousness. The young man took in the whole at a glance, drew his own conclusion about the luck of his friend, and the next second was shaking hands with Miss Bellairs.

He did not look so keenly at the girl.

Dinner was announced at the same moment. Goldsmith was stepping eagerly forward to offer his arm to Miss Bellairs when the old lady's look stopped him.

"Captain Trevor, will you take down my granddaughter? Mr. Goldsmith——"

He could do nothing but offer her his arm, biting his lip with rage and mortification.

He was too much annoyed to be able to speak for a moment, and could only watch with angry, hurt eyes the slender figure of the girl, with her dowdy old gown, passing on in front, across the hall. Whether Captain Trevor was pleased with the arrangement or not, he did not show. His face was almost supernaturally grave as he took his place on the same side of the table as the girl. She seemed shy, too, and ill at ease, though she tried to talk to Trevor, and addressed Goldsmith several times, as if she saw the gloom on his face, and tried to lighten it. Captain Trevor was intensely glad at the sight of the soup, which gave some little diversion to the anxious thoughts of the eaters. But as the dinner went on, he felt more and more sorry for the girl.

There was scarcely enough of anything

to go round. He grew quite anxious himself at last about taking only the exact share which he felt had been allotted to him, and helped himself to infinitesimal portions, so as to spare the girl the anxious flush which would sweep over her face as the dishes passed. He forgot all about Goldsmith's love-troubles, and all about his own hunger, in the excitement of wondering whether the sauce would hold out, or whether the jelly would bear dividing, and all the time Lady Bellairs talked away about the hardness of times, and all that she had gone through, and the impossibility to make both ends meet unless some addition could be made to her income, and the miserable way she had been cheated in town with her cabbages.

Captain Trevor could see how the girl winced and quivered beneath it all, and how her face grew paler and her lips prouder, until, at last, not even Goldsmith's remarks to her, which he made every time he could get a word in between Lady Bellairs's grievances, could bring the pretty colour back to her face, or the light to her eyes. In Trevor's excitement, he ate up the helping of sweets on his plate at one mouthful, and was stricken with remorse while it was yet in his mouth. In his anxiety not to let her notice how rapidly he had disposed of his portion, he turned abruptly to her.

"Don't you find it horribly dull here?" he asked. "I think Horton is a hateful station."

She started, and a scarlet wave swept over her face. She glanced at her grandmother, who was enlarging upon some new grievance to Goldsmith.

"Yes," she said in a low tone; "I should like to see more of the world; I am tired of being shut up. But my time will come, I suppose, some day. At least my grandmother tells me so."

"When the prince comes in the shape of a rich husband," thought the young officer; but he only said in a slow, reflective tone: "I hope it will come soon then. But still the world has its drawbacks, too."

"Ah yes—perhaps so. But it means life," she said, with a faint ring of passion in her voice, and a dreamy, half-dissatisfied, half-longing look in her eyes which reminded the young man of a child just waking out of a dream to the reality of life, which as yet seems all beauty. What would they look like when the first disappointment came? The thought made him glance over at Lady Bellairs and Goldsmith. He was

much discomfited by finding that old lady's eyes, which reminded him of gimlets, fixed upon him. He was so overcome by the discovery that he made another attack on his plate, forgetting that he had already demolished his share.

"Will you have some more—custard?" asked the sweet voice of Miss Bellairs, seeing his attempt, and looking at him anxiously.

There was one custard left, Goldsmith, having had a previous experience of Lady Bellairs's custards made from egg-powder, having declined his.

Captain Trevor would willingly have eaten it, to drive that look from the girl's eyes. But before he had time to sacrifice himself Lady Bellairs rose.

She did not give dessert, as she sold all her fruit.

The young men did not linger over the wine which was put out for them. Goldsmith confided to his friend that he believed the small quantity of sherry at the bottom of the decanter had been carefully measured out into wine-glasses for them, and that there was more than a dash of water in the port. They both looked thoughtfully at the decanter for a minute or two, then rose simultaneously and made their way to the drawing-room.

When they reached it, they found Lady Bellairs sitting at one end of it, with a huge entangled packet of coloured wools on her knee.

At the other end of the long room stood Miss Bellairs, looking over some music.

Goldsmith turned his steps in her direction, but Lady Bellairs called him.

"Come over here, Mr. Goldsmith, and talk to me. Clarice, play something for Captain Trevor."

Goldsmith, with a sound like a smothered imprecation beneath his fair moustache, obeyed. It was rather hard that a young man, six-foot-two without his stockings, and daily expecting his company, should be ordered about like this. But she was such a terrible old woman that he dared not disobey, for all his future happiness might depend on her good-will. So a few minutes later he was sitting before her, meekly holding her wools while she disentangled and wound them.

Captain Trevor, also obeying, went over to the piano, and stood there while Clarice played. As the girl's fingers touched the notes and filled the room with harmony, the storm broke over poor Goldsmith's

"Mr. Goldsmith," said Lady Bellairs with scornful indignation, "when I received you into my house, some time ago, and made you welcome to my hospitality, I did not think that I was, in return, to be exposed to the most cruel insult. I and my orphan granddaughter never expected to be hurt and humiliated by the guest we received so kindly."

"Lady Bellairs!" the young officer gasped, his face quite white with dismay, "what have I done to merit such an accusation? Has my aunt written to you? I was afraid——"

"So she has written to you, too?" interrupted Lady Bellairs, with the disagreeable triumph of a person who has discovered what she wanted. "Would you kindly hold up the wool a little higher, and don't look over there as if we were discussing those two at the piano. I have no desire to drag my granddaughter into such an unpleasant affair, though you, apparently, have not had the same feeling."

"Lady Bellairs! I don't know what you mean!" said the young man, with an honest dignity which made him look still handsomer, while the wool became hopelessly entangled as it dropped from his fingers. "You must have seen by this time——"

But this was not what Lady Bellairs wanted. She had no desire to bring matters to a crisis, one way or another, till she saw her way more clearly.

"I am sorry if I have misjudged you," she said, though her face was still relentlessly hard. "But what else could I imagine, than that you had been talking of and discussing publicly my granddaughter when I receive such strange letters as this?"

She drew a crumpled letter out of her pocket, and gave it him to read:

"The Chase, July 7th.

"MADAME,—I hear that my great-nephew, James Cadogan Goldsmith, is permitting himself to pay his addresses to your granddaughter. I think it only my duty to let you know that the young gentleman in question is entirely dependent, as far as fortune is concerned, on my good will. Without my sanction, his marriage might lead to deplorable results. Let me trust that Miss Bellairs, who, I hear from report, is as charming as beautiful, may soon find a man of fortune and pleasing parts to persuade her to change her name.—I remain,  
MARIA GOLDSMITH."

The young man stared at the terrible

epistle as if he had been turned into stone. It was worse even than he imagined.

Lady Bellairs looked at him. If utter dismay, and a mental disturbance which had made him white to the lips, could satisfy her for any humiliation the letter had caused herself, she saw quite enough to soothe her own ruffled feelings now.

"A pleasant kind of letter to receive!" she said in a grating tone. "I, who would be the last person to thrust any girl belonging to me on the notice of a man. I asked you here out of kindness, because I once knew this aunt of yours. There was a little disagreement in those old days"—a flash of malicious triumph lighted up for a second the withered face, and there was a faint touch of ghostly coquetry in the way the wrinkled neck was lifted—"but it was long ago, and I did not wish still to bear malice, though, apparently, your relation still wishes to keep up the old, foolish quarrel."

She stretched out her hand for the letter. But the action roused the young man. His fingers closed over it tightly.

"Let me keep it, Lady Bellairs, for just a little. I will apply for leave, and run down to see my aunt herself. I will tell her what this letter of hers has cost you—ma. She is fond of me, and has been good to me all my life. She will not refuse me now the only thing that can give me happiness."

He bent forward, looking up eagerly into her face, his voice trembling a little from the passion stirring his whole being.

Lady Bellairs saw that she had nothing to fear from the nephew. There was only the aunt; but, so long as she was still unconquered, she herself would understand nothing.

"I don't know why you should drag your life's happiness into the discussion," she said severely. "To me, the only thing interested in this unpleasant affair is my granddaughter's name. You must understand that I will not have it talked about, and coupled with that of a young man, particularly now, when provisions are at such a price, and the income-tax iniquitous, and the shameful price I get for my eggs makes me blush to take it. She is to be perfectly free, so that, when the time comes that 'the man of fortune,' so kindly suggested by your relative, arrives on the scene, her mind will not be unsettled by such a foolish thing as this."

Goldsmith understood.

With his aunt's fortune he might hope; without it he was lost.

He drew a heavy breath and looked away—towards the piano, where stood Clarice in her badly-made white gown, too short in the skirt and too tight in the sleeves, though the girl, with an innate sense of coquetry, had turned them up to the elbow, leaving the round, white arms bare. The very gown told its own tale. She had, up till now, always received him in the evening in a fashionable one, which had, indeed, been made by Lady Bellairs's orders, expressly for such occasions. To-night she had gone back to her usual dowdy, old-fashioned toilette, and he saw Lady Bellairs's hand even in this trifling circumstance. The pretty new frock was to be reserved for "the man of fortune."

The intense bitterness and pain that suddenly darkened his face at the thought stirred some feeling, whatever it might be, even in Lady Bellairs's scared old heart.

"You had better go over and say something to Clarice," she said, with a grim attempt at a smile, "and stop your friend making love to her like that."

The voice, rasping and clear, though slightly dropped, reached the farther end of the room, where Clarice stood, having finished her music, still talking to Captain Trevor.

He had been saying something to her, and she was looking up into his face, laughing, a faint flush on her cheeks, a happy light in her dark-fringed eyes. As Lady Bellairs's voice reached them, she shrank back suddenly in frightened shame, while the two men started, Captain Trevor flushing a dull, deep red, while Goldsmith turned as white as a sheet. Lady Bellairs perfectly indifferent, beyond feeling a little malicious amusement at the result of her speech, made no attempt to undo its painful impression. But it had a curious effect on Miss Bellairs. After that first shock of outraged pride, a sudden, great change took place in her. It seemed as if in one second she had stepped from the shy, half childish, half proud reserve of a girl brought up in the strictest seclusion into the nature of a woman, graceful and composed. There was one second's painful pause; then she came quietly over to Goldsmith, who had not stirred.

"We are waiting for your song, Mr. Goldsmith," she said, smiling a little gravely perhaps, but looking at him with steady, unclouded eyes. "Captain Trevor

has been telling me what a treasure, you are to the mess."

The graceful new dignity of her manner surprised even her grandmother, who, however, after the first feeling of wondering satisfaction, felt more than ever that it behoved her to save her from the admiration of a suitor whose prospects were so unsettled as James Goldsmith's.

"It is getting rather late, dear, I think," she said graciously, "and Mr. Goldsmith looks tired. I dare say he has been on duty all day."

At the same instant Captain Trevor came over to them and said that he must return to town, as he had work to do. Goldsmith made the same excuse, and the two young men said "Good-night."

As Clarice gave Goldsmith her hand, she looked up at him with such an odd kind of pity, such a curious, troubled questioning in her eyes, that he could not stand it, and dropped the little hand hastily, and turned away.

The walk home was very silent. Captain Trevor talked a little, but Goldsmith's answers were so short and so wide of the mark that he took pity on him, and left him in peace. But as they reached the barracks and stopped before their quarters, he suddenly flung away his cigar, and laid his hand on his friend's shoulder, turning him, so that the light fell on their two faces.

"Look here, Goldsmith, before we turn in, tell me one thing. You don't believe anything of what that old beldam said to-night?"

The young man started, a tremor passing through him from head to foot, while a scarlet flush dyed his pale face.

"No," he said, his eyes darkened with shame, but looking straight into his friend's; "not now."

"Honour bright?" asked Trevor again, not loosing his grasp.

"Honour bright, Trevor! I say, what a brute you must have thought me!"

"I didn't," said the other laconically, taking away his hand, and moving towards the door.

"But I was a brute, all the same!" exclaimed his friend with remorseful eagerness as he followed. "But what did you think of her?"

"The worst-dressed girl I ever saw in my life. Good-night!"

And he was gone, leaving Goldsmith divided between a desire to knock him down, and a penitence so great that his cheeks still tingled with that hot flush.

### CHAPTER III.

GOLDSMITH'S amazement was not easy to be described when the next morning a note was given him by his man. It was from his great-aunt, dated that morning from one of the hotels in the town, requesting him to call upon her as soon as he was at liberty. His amazement was not unmingled with dismay. That his aunt should have thought it necessary to take this long journey upon a mere rumour of his attachment to Miss Bellairs—for it could be nothing else—appalled him.

For the first time in all his life he felt that he would rather have gone to the ends of the earth, than to meet the aunt who had, up to now, been the dearest creature living.

He started for the hotel as soon as he was free.

He was ushered into a neat private sitting-room where his great-aunt awaited him. Not a formidable-looking person by any means, with her white hair and neat tulle cap, still round and plump with the stoutness which had been the great grievance of her middle-age. And her skin was still pretty, and did not wrinkle over sunken cheeks like Lady Bellairs's, though there were not many other traces of the fresh prettiness which had made her so attractive when Lady Bellairs and she were girls, in the days when her simpler attractions had not been able to hold the lover whom Lady Bellairs coveted—whom her great beauty had won. But she was infinitely more comely and pleasant-looking now than her former beautiful rival, and in the quaint care of her dress, carried to even an over-excess of white laces and bows of ribbon, she made a very agreeable picture of honoured old age.

"My dear James!" she exclaimed, as the young man entered, rising to go to meet him, "I have been waiting here for the last three hours!"

"I'm so sorry, aunt," said the young man, bending his tall head and gravely kissing her; "I would have come sooner if I could."

"I hate waiting, especially when—Did you get my letter, James?"

"Yes, aunt—rather!" answered the young man, sinking down a little wearily on a seat facing hers. "And Lady Bellairs got hers. Oh, aunt! how could you?"

He had meant to be quiet, but to see his aunt sitting there, looking placidly at him,

while his whole being was aching and quivering yet from those two letters, completely overcame him. He sprang up, and began pacing restlessly the room, not trusting himself to speak for a second, lest he should say something he would regret to the end of his days, to the woman who had done so much for him.

His great-aunt looked at him for a second or two, her pretty ringed hands folded over the large white handkerchief on her knees.

"My dear James," she said suddenly, "I hate that woman!" and she nodded her head as if she meant it.

"Aunt!" The young man was really shocked. "It is dreadful to hear you speaking like that.

He stopped short in his walk and looked at her, something almost like disgust struggling into the pain and wonder of his eyes.

The old lady met his gaze steadily, though there was a faint flush even beneath her old skin, as if the expression of his face hurt her.

"I am sorry, my dear James, to shock you so," she said; "but it is a fact, and Lady Bellairs knows it, and the reason. I wonder how she dared encourage you. James Goldsmith, you should have told me! You should have given me some hint. Was it not my right? I have had no children of my own, thanks to that woman, but you took their place. You had grown so dear to me, that I had forgotten all that old pain and bitterness. Then, one day, I hear that you have been taking the most important step in a man's life. And how do I hear it? By chance. Through the very enquiries made by this woman to find out your prospects—the state of my affairs! This woman, my bitterest enemy!"

The young man looked at her in amazement.

She had risen from her seat, and the words fell from her lips in passionate anger, looking as unlike the placid, smiling, old aunt he had always known, as the openly expressed hatred was different to the sweet charity of her daily life.

"And I do hate her!" she added, in a kind of breathless gasp, as she sank back in her chair again. "But that is not the only reason. There is another. That girl cannot make you happy. The granddaughter of a woman like that! Brought up all her life with a woman like that! Why, James Goldsmith, she would turn

your life into a hell, as her grandmother did Mark Bellairs's before you! Ah, you don't know that history," as the young man tried to speak. "Come and sit here, while I tell you. Years ago, Mark Bellairs and I were engaged lovers. She took him from me by lying words, and her beauty. But I could have forgiven that. She broke his heart after his marriage; ruined him, and left him to die alone in miserable lodgings. I heard of it and went to him. I was rich, too, in those days, and would have given him my fortune to save him; but it was too late. He died of destitution, while she had plenty in her father's house. Even that was not all. To cover her own shameless neglect, she spread tales of him and me—do you understand!"

The old lady could blush as hotly now as a girl, but, with a gesture of disdain, she went on more quietly:

"It did not matter for me. For I still lived to refute the lies, but he died. Now, you want to marry her granddaughter!"

There was a dead silence. The young man looked away. The old lady lay back in her chair as if exhausted.

Then suddenly Goldsmith turned and caught her hands in his, and kissed them. But he held them still as he raised his head and looked steadily into her face.

"As you loved Mark Bellairs, I love Clarice Bellairs. As you would have given your fortune to save him, I would give my life to save her. You must judge for us. You are nearer eternity, as far as time goes, than I. You can tell better whether even a just hatred be worth the carrying on into it than I. You, nearer heaven's gates, must know, better than I, what forgiveness is worth."

There was a dead silence; only a faint tremor shook the old lady from head to foot. Then she drew her hands away.

"I can't decide," she said faintly, as she sat up and looked at him with anguish-darkened eyes. "Go away now; I cannot hear any more."

#### CHAPTER IV.

BUT things were not to be left unaided for Miss Goldsmith's decision. Fate was to have something to do with them. She was so upset by her morning's interview that after luncheon, she ordered a carriage, and went for a country drive. As the carriage was bowling swiftly along through the sunny country lanes, they overtook a

extraordinary-looking turn-out, very low on the springs, and very clumsy as to the make. It was being drawn by a horse who had evidently his own views on the subject of pace, for, in spite of a great waving of whip and jerking of reins from the lady driving it, he still refused to hasten his steps.

There were two ladies in the carriage, while on the front seat was a large hamper of garden-produce, and several other untidy bundles, some wrapped up in strangely-checked cloths, and others in newspaper, all tied up with string.

It was Lady Bellairs and Clarice in the "tub," proceeding to a neighbouring village, where Lady Bellairs sometimes found purchasers for her goods. Clarice was holding carefully a basket of eggs on her knees, there being nowhere to put it down.

As Miss Goldsmith rolled past in her carriage, the girl, conscious of the undignified picture they must make altogether, glanced up a little vexed, though with a half-humorous light in her dark eyes, expecting to see an acquaintance. Miss Goldsmith looked down, and met full the upturned face.

As her carriage swept on, she leant back in her seat, every vestige of colour lost from her comely old face.

"Mark Bellairs," she murmured to herself; "Mark Bellairs as he used to look at me long ago, when I made him laugh. Oh, Mark—Mark! I must forgive, for the sake of your eyes looking out of that child's face. Oh, Mark!"

That night Lady Bellairs received a note which filled her heart with triumphant rejoicing. For, though cold as an icicle, it was eminently satisfactory.

And the very next morning the "tub" waited outside the hotel door, while Lady Bellairs, with Clarice, went up to meet her ancient rival.

It was as well for both that the girl assisted at that first meeting. It is to be feared that it was only that delicate oval face, with its glorious eyes bearing such a tartling resemblance to the dead Mark Bellairs, that helped Miss Goldsmith to receive her enemy with ordinary civility.

The very instant her eyes fell on Lady Bellairs she felt that she disliked her as much as ever, by the thrill of pleasure that ran through her at finding that all the effects which she had prophesied would mar Lady Bellairs's beauty had come to pass. The slender aquiline nose was hooked now like

a beak; the dainty, though rather too pointed chin had advanced, as the lovely mouth, whose only fault had been too thin lips, had receded. The hair, which had been perfect in its curly disorder when dark and thick, looked untidy now in its white, straggly thinness. But if Lady Bellairs felt any vexation that her rival had worn better than herself, she gave no signs of it. She advanced, and held out her hand with the warm graciousness of an old friend. Maria Goldsmith gave one quick glance into the sweet girl-face behind, and held out her hand. That short visit was not the end of the intercourse, though it was almost the end of it as far as Lady Bellairs and Miss Goldsmith were concerned. For the latter, after returning Lady Bellairs's visit in state, did not go again to The Croft, neither did Lady Bellairs come again to the hotel.

But matters were different with the young people. Whenever Goldsmith was not at The Croft, which, it must be confessed, was very often, Lady Bellairs seeing no reason why she should provide meals for him when he and Clarice could both have them with Miss Goldsmith, he and Clarice were at the hotel.

Miss Goldsmith would send for the girl in the morning, and she would spend the day with her, the two being joined by Goldsmith whenever he was off duty. The old lady was delighted with the girl, who was sweet and true enough even to satisfy Miss Goldsmith's only too natural fears of her grandmother's influence. There was only one thing that raised a little doubt in her mind, and it was through her advice that James did not propose to her the very first evening she spent at the hotel.

"She does not suspect anything yet," she said. "Give her time. Girls are easily frightened, and it is evident that Lady Bellairs has not given her a hint. Let her find out first how much she needs you. She is still such a child!"

Goldsmith, though bitterly impatient, yielded to her wise persuasions, knowing that she had now the marriage almost as much to heart as himself. Indeed, it had become a feverish desire with her, as if by this means she and her old lover, separated by such a great gulf of years, and treachery, and cruelty, might meet again.

At first Trevor used to make one of the party at the hotel, for the old lady had taken a great fancy to him. But after the first fortnight he did not drop in so often, making various excuses for his absence, and one day, about a month after Miss Goldsmith's

arrival at the hotel, he applied for leave, and went away. He called to say good-bye, but only saw Miss Goldsmith. Goldsmith missed him dreadfully, as he had spent every spare moment of his time in talking about Clarice to him.

A week after Trevor's departure, he was coming down the road that led past Lady Bellairs's house. Clarice had not been to see his aunt for three days. As he passed through the lane on the other side of the hedge which bordered the lawn, he caught sight of her. Oddly enough, she was standing in just the same position on the doorstep as that in which he and Trevor had first seen her, looking west, and shading her eyes from the rays of the sun.

"She is like an enchanted princess looking for the coming prince," Goldsmith had said. As he saw her again now, he remembered his first fancy, and the next moment the fancy had passed into a great desire which mastered all prudence, all thought of anything save his own love and her.

A few more minutes, and he stood by her side. She had not heard him come, but as he spoke her name, she dropped her hand, and turned quickly. The sight of her eyes, dimmed and red as if she had been crying, broke down the last barrier.

"Grandmother is out," she said, "but she will not be long. Will you come indoors, or stay here?"

He said he would go indoors, and she led the way to the drawing-room. Then, before he quite knew what he was doing, he was standing before her, and pouring out in broken, disconnected phrases, all the love he had forced back for so long.

She stood looking at him as if turned to stone. She did not attempt to stop him. It seemed as if she were too shocked—as if she had found herself suddenly in some terrible trap. Her face was perfectly white, her eyes almost dazed with a kind of horror which he could not understand.

"Clarice! Oh, my little love! Don't you understand me?"

He put out his hand as if to touch hers. Then she shrank back a little.

"And my grandmother said it was not true," she said in a low voice; "that I was——"

"What do you mean, dear?" asked the young man gently, trying hard for her sake to be quiet, fearing that he had terrified her with his passion.

"Oh, Mr. Goldsmith, what have I done?" she cried. "But I—indeed—indeed, I did

not know. I was afraid sometimes. And when she told me that I must try to make you all like me, I told her, but she only laughed at me. She said it was all my foolish fancy. That when I had lived a little longer in the world, I should not imagine that every man who paid me attention wanted to marry me. That you were too rich, too far above me, now that we were so poor, for you to care for me. But she told me that there was a reason that I should do what I could to——"

She was red enough now. Her face was flushed with such a scarlet wave of shame and pain, that the young man, dimly seeing it through the awful mist of fear and doubt which seemed suddenly to have wrapped him in, tried to spare her.

"Tell me," he said quietly, though his voice sounded strange in his own ears, "what reason did your grandmother give for wishing you to be kind to us?"

"She said that once—long ago, she did your aunt a great injury; that she was tired of such long years of hate. That when she met you she was glad to do what she could, and that for her past sin I must help, too, to teach you and your aunt to forgive."

"When did she tell you all this?" he asked again, still with the same strained quiet.

"After your aunt came. It was then that, when she mentioned your name, I told her—— Ah, how can I speak of it? How foolish—how wicked I have been!"

"Neither foolish nor wicked," Goldsmith tried to smile. "But—was it then that your grandmother told you that I was too rich to care——"

"Yes."

"Heaven help me! And she knew it all along. She knew how I loved you!"

He could not help the exceeding bitter cry. Then he turned back swiftly to her.

"Tell me," he said, "just one thing. Have been foolish. I have spoken too soon. If I had waited—if I wait——"

"Ah! But that's just it. Oh, if there were any hope I would give it, for the wickedness I have done you. Yes: I was wicked. I ought to have known. I ought not to have been so blinded. But I was always thinking of something else. And so I went on, doing all I could to make you and your aunt forget that wicked past. And now I can only make it worse a hundredfold."

"No—no. Give me one hope. Just say, 'I will try——'"

"I cannot. I should be sinning against you worse than your aunt was sinned against long ago. Last night, when my grandmother was angry with me because I happened to say it was wicked for girls to marry for money, I found out something in my own life. Cannot you guess what?"

He did guess, and for a moment the discovery was more almost than he could bear.

Then he suddenly turned to her again and caught her hands in his, kissing them as he had done his aunt's six weeks ago. The decision of his life had been made at last.

"You have decided for both our lives," he said gently, though his voice was still hoarse. "Heaven bless you, dear, whatever pain it may have cost me!"

The next moment he had gone.

That night, as Goldsmith sat with his great-aunt, he told her what had happened.

She listened without a word. She sat so still and so silent for so long after he had spoken that, at last, he was afraid, and, rising from the dusky corner where he had been sitting to tell her his story, he came over to her and knelt down by the side of her as he used to do in his old school-boy days, putting his arm round her neck.

Then she turned her face to him and he saw that it was stained with tears, yet unfigured by a strange look that was reverence, and pain, and wondering submission all in one.

"My dear," she said softly, "we have many lessons to learn. I had thought that you two I might live over again the old tale. I believed that human hands might do some of the wrong that human hearts have done, and I thought that my hands might do this—that in some way the piousness of you two might atone for the sins of hate and malice which I have done against those who wronged me.

It is not to be. Perhaps it is my punishment. If so, it is a bitter one. Yet the pain of it is light compared to my grief for you, my dear boy!"

Then she bent forward and kissed him very gently, with lips still unsteady from the pain, but sweet and grave with duty such as had never been there before.

"Thank you, aunt," said the young man, after a pause which neither could

But there was a touch of reverence in his quiet words.

#### CHAPTER V.

"JAMES," said Miss Goldsmith one morning, three days later, as she was making her final preparations for leaving the hotel, "I am going to take Clarice back with me. She has been having a fearful time of it since—this last day or two. She looks almost dead."

The young man was gazing moodily out of the window of the private sitting-room into the street below. He started as his aunt spoke, and turned round, looking at her in a strange way.

"It is no use," said Miss Goldsmith quietly, but looking steadily into his face with an expression so full of grave tenderness that he saw how foolish his sudden hope had been. "I saw the girl yesterday, and found out something. It will be still better for you to go abroad for a little."

His face turned white, but he made no remark. And Miss Goldsmith, knowing that it was best that he should hear everything now, went on:

"I have found out that you and I are not the only ones who have suffered. Poor little Clarice! She, too, is loving without hope, and that added, too, to the sorrow she is feeling for us. But the child was right. She has been honest and true, even at the cost of such suffering to herself. And do you know, James"—she did not look at him now—"I am beginning to read another page in this enigma of cross-purposes. While we have been only thinking of ourselves, another was sacrificing himself like the hero that he is. We have been so blind, and he so faithful, James; I did not know that your friend was so true. Cannot you guess now why Captain Trevor went away?"

It was a terrible shock. She knew that by the heavy drawn breath, by the strained silence that followed. She went on quietly arranging her writing-case, not to look at him.

"Clarice cares for him, though he has never given sign or word. And now, holding the clue as I do, I can understand him. Having no longer our own interests to blind me, and looking back to his behaviour, I know that he loves her. But I did not tell Clarice this. It was best. She herself feels there is no hope. Her grandmother will not let her marry a poor man."

"But, aunt," after another pause, "you are rich, and you say that what you have



will be mine. Cannot you and I between us—?"

"Heaven bless you, my boy!" The old lady rose, and came towards him with outstretched hands. "What a foolish old woman I am to ask for anything more, save the love of a child such as you. Ah, James, there is nothing on earth I care for now, but your happiness."

He took the trembling old hands in his, and looked down into the love-lighted face.

"And you will not think any more," he asked, smiling slightly, though his face had not quite recovered its colour, "that I believe my happiness would be made by marrying a woman who did not love me?"

He and Miss Maria Goldsmith had a little longer talk; then he left her to go back to barracks. She and Clarice were to leave the next morning. Lady Bellairs had been only too glad to let the girl go. She had been perfectly furious when she discovered what Clarice had done, and the thought of the visit to The Chase seemed her only hope for the girl changing her mind.

Clarice was to go with her boxes up to the hotel in the afternoon, and spend the night there so as to be ready to start early the next morning. Captain Trevor had returned to Horton the day before. He looked ill and worried, as if his leave had not done him much good; but Goldsmith, too much troubled himself, had not taken much notice of his friend's looks. As he remembered them now, he was filled with remorse. He had said nothing of his own trouble to him. He had felt that he could not bear yet to mention it, even to his closest friend. Now, perhaps, one of the hardest parts of the whole hard business had to be gone through.

Only the thought of what that rival must have gone through himself gave him courage to go straight to his quarters, and have it out at once.

Trevor, who was reading the paper, looked pleased to see him as he entered, but at the sight of Goldsmith's face his own grew a little alarmed, and he rose hastily from the lounging-chair in which he was lazily taking his ease.

"What's up?" he asked a little quickly. "Been run over? I know that brute of yours will finish you off one of these days."

"Unless my friends do it first for me! Oh, Trevor, how could you have treated me so shamefully?"

And Goldsmith, holding out his hand, was looking into his face, with something in his eyes which made Trevor turn pale.

"I don't know——" he began.

"Yes, you do. I have found it all out—I and my aunt together. Without her I should have gone blundering on to the end of the chapter. Trevor, you shouldn't have done it! I was a brute just for that one night; but do you think I was mean enough not to let you have your innings at the same time. And Clarice——"

"And Clarice?" asked the other with pale lips, as Goldsmith stopped abruptly. It was hard to say.

"Clarice! Well, I have asked her, and she is too good for me. I am not to have her."

"But you will one day. She will find out."

Trevor was trying to speak in his usual tones; but Goldsmith could see how terribly moved he was.

It filled him with such remorse that he could only take his hand again, and give it a wring which sent all the blood tingling.

"Will you ever forgive me, old fellow?" he asked a little unsteadily.

"Forgive you! There was nothing to forgive; but Miss Bellairs——"

"Oh, Miss Bellairs!" then he stopped again. Clarice's secret was not to be discussed between two men. His friend must find out for himself. "You must try your luck. And as for Lady Bellairs——"

"I am not afraid of her," said the other simply. "I am rich——"

"Rich! Why, I was afraid——" Forgive me, but you know you always talk as if you were poor," said his friend, and refused at his apparent impertinence.

"So I was—till the morning you received Miss Goldsmith's letter. I had done too, telling me that an uncle of mine was dead in America, leaving me his heir. I was very rich, and I——"

"Heaven forgive me, for I don't think I shall ever forgive myself! And you have this back, too, so that I might have had one chance as well. Don't tell me anything more, or I shall go off and wring your own neck."

"Don't!" Trevor laughed. But as the two men looked into each other's eyes and read something in them that made it difficult to utter another word.

Captain Trevor went up to the barracks about five that afternoon. He was shown into Miss Goldsmith's private sitting-room.

There was only one person in it, Miss Maria having announced, a few minutes before his arrival, that she was going up to her room for a nap before dinner. She had kissed Clarice in an odd, lingering kind of fashion which had brought tears into the girl's eyes.

They were still there when Captain Trevor entered, for life seemed so hard just now to the lonely girl that every little act of kindness from those she imagined she had so deeply wronged overcame her.

Ah yes! she had learned already that the world, of which she had had only as yet a mere glimpse, had terrible drawbacks!

And that her life, closed in as it had been in that dreary old house, with that unlovable old grandmother as her only companion, had never had such bitter pain as that she was now enduring. Was it because he, too, had found life like this that he had warned her that night at her grandmother's?

But as, startled at the sound of a foot-step near her, she turned her tear-stained face to look, she saw that the prince had come at last!

Miss Maria Goldsmith assisted at the wedding that followed. She seemed to have acquired a new dignity, which lasted on through all the following years.

## MADAME LAURE.

By MARION F. THEED.

### L

"I CAN'T make it out, Mary; if the tidal-train were ever so late, she ought to have been in long before this."

"Yes, I suppose she ought," my sister said reluctantly. "The only thing is, you see, she is so strange to everything, and I don't suppose she speaks much English; it would be only natural for her to be a little delayed."

"A little delayed!" I exclaimed. "My dear Mary, have you any idea of the time? It is past ten o'clock, and she ought to have been here between seven and eight."

My sister raised her eyebrows in mild astonishment.

"I did not know it was so long since you read prayers," she said; "the time always seems to fly so when we are by ourselves. I wonder if we shall ever be rich enough to do without parlour boarders?" she

added with a wistful look up at me, where I lay back in my own special easy-chair, resting my tired head after a hard day's work.

It always seemed to be her one ambition, that, just to have the little spare time we could call our own in the midst of our busy lives quite to ourselves. But I did not know when it would be possible to gratify it. School-keeping is arduous, precarious work; it had been so in our case, at any rate; and even now, when Mary, who was a good deal younger than I, had entered into the forties, I did not see my way to any such radical change in our mode of life. On the whole I was fairly satisfied with the progress we had made and the position we held. If our establishment was not a very large one, it was at least more select than nineteen out of twenty in an age which is nothing if it is not levelling; and we had never to our knowledge admitted the daughter of a tradesman within the charmed circle of our young ladies. People had begun to talk already of the higher education of women, and of preparing girls for university examination as if they were their own brothers; but we set our faces against it from the first. We had no greater ambition for the dear children committed from time to time to our charge, than that they should be fitted to adorn and elevate society as helpmeets to men—not as their rivals.

"You dear, good, old-fashioned souls! You are half a century behind the times," Lady Gay Spanker said to me once; "but if I had any girls of my own, I should send them to you, nevertheless."

And we found that was the way with a good many people. They laughed at us, but they believed in us. I do not see myself how they could have done otherwise than believe in Mary. If ever there was an angel upon earth she was one. She was simply like the grandmother in the French poem the girls in the first class used to read and recite—Charity personified. Whenever they came to the line—

"O grandmère," dit-il, "la charité c'est toi!"—

I used to find myself looking round involuntarily to the table at which she sat; but though she may have seen the look and returned it with that ready smile of hers, the thought that was in my mind would never have occurred to her.

Oh, wad some fay the giftie gie us  
To see oursels as others see us!

was not written of such as my Mary.

She sat opposite me on that September evening of which I am writing, embroidering some delicate blue flannel, the colour of which, as it lay massed together in her lap, threw up the soft tints of her complexion in a wonderful way. She had one of those lovely, creamy skins into which the least heat or excitement brings a flush like the first flush of morning, and what with the beauty of that, and the brilliancy of her soft, brown eyes contrasting with them, I used to think that the white hairs, at which she had arrived so early, only constituted a fresh claim to admiration. Everybody said "Miss Mary" had such a sweet face. It was not merely a matter of chiselling or colouring. There was upon it that beautiful calm and tenderness which can only come of a heart at peace with itself, and at leisure from itself. I cannot describe it, but I always think it must have been that expression in it which drew Madame Laure to her that first night.

There was nothing striking or artistic in any way in our surroundings. The small, square sitting-room, with its green paper sparingly relieved with gold, and its sombre, dark-green hangings, with mahogany bookshelves fitted into the recesses on either side of the fireplace, and the round table in the centre with the lamp upon it, and the half-chiffonier, half-sideboard, in the glass back of which I saw myself reflected—a tall, spare, elderly woman, hard-featured rather than otherwise, and as unlike Mary as I could possibly be—all this formed surroundings than which nothing could have been more commonplace. But there was a bright fire burning in the grate, and I remember thinking to myself drowsily, that to the poor little French teacher this first introduction to English comfort would seem something too good to be true.

I held—indeed I always have held—foreigners of all sorts in a certain contempt. I have endeavoured to avoid imparting it, but, in myself, I have never been able to overcome it. There is no reason that I know of why we English-speaking folk should be better than our neighbours, and I know that nowadays it is the fashion to be cosmopolitan, as they call it, but I am too old to rid myself of my prejudices.

We had always had a *mademoiselle*. As a rule she had been of mixed nationality, the Swiss article being the cheaper, and, on the score of a joint interest in the two languages, the more useful; but, latterly, Miss Pettitt—between whom and ourselves

there had existed for some years past a friendly rivalry—had started a Parisian, and this time we had thought it advisable to follow her example. So we had written direct to the first educational bureau in Paris, and stipulated for as pure an accent and as thorough a knowledge of elementary music as could be reasonably expected for a comfortable home and a small salary. The result had been the recommendation of Madame Laure—a young widow, whose French and music we should find above the average, and whose friendlessness and want of experience in teaching would make it a charity upon our parts to take her. We thought the want of experience might enable us all the more easily to get her into our own method, and we wrote to engage her.

It was nearly eleven o'clock that night when the cab containing her at last drove up to the door. In spite of my sister's gentle suggestions and excuses, I felt a little ruffled and annoyed at so late an arrival, and as one means—in all probability quite lost upon her—of marking my disapproval, I did not go out into the hall to meet her. We heard the luggage deposited there, and the cabman dismissed, and then the little parlour-maid showed her in.

I can see her now, in my mind's eye, standing, framed by the doorway, which would not, by the way, have allowed of her being many inches taller, even in that low turban-hat, than she really was; a slight, erect figure, wrapped from head to foot in a dark waterproof cloak, her face fair and refined, but of a deathly pallor, lighted up by a pair of most wonderful eyes—eyes, her possession of which I felt myself resenting and inwardly protesting against on the spot as unbecoming any governess in existence.

"I am so sorry," she said, speaking in French, in a particularly pretty voice, but with a nervousness which pleased me better than her appearance, "but it is not my fault I have kept you up so late, and perhaps caused you anxiety. The tidal-train came into collision with another, between twenty and thirty miles from town, and there was no means of sending any of the passengers on for some time. At one time," she added, "I did not think I should have arrived here to-night."

"That would have been dreadful!" my sister said, coming forward from behind me—it was always she who was first to do the right thing—and taking the stranger's

hands in hers. "We should have been so unhappy about you, knowing you were amongst foreigners, and not knowing what might have come to you. You must come to the fire and get warm, and tell us all about it, and, Essie, there is some supper to be brought in—is there not?"

She had begun in her eager way—always so anxious to set people at ease and at home—speaking English; now, remembering, she checked herself, and added, in French:

"You do speak English—don't you?—a little, we understood. We do not know much of your language—my sister and I."

"A little," the other answered shyly, still in her own tongue.

She looked more nervous than ever, and she shivered as she spoke. Mary almost pushed me aside, noticing it, to make way for her to the fire.

"You are very good, madame—I am not cold," she said; then, in English, with a strong accent, and speaking very deliberately, as one who had to frame her sentences before uttering them: "I am only very tired, and would like to go to bed."

"But we cannot let you do that until you have had something," I said. "You must have had a great shock. Was the accident a serious one?"

She was afraid very; there had been a considerable loss of life, so she had been told; indeed, she had seen as much for herself. She could not bear to talk of it or think of it.

"But the carriage you were in escaped? You sustained no injury?"

"I was thrown from one end to the other of it, and I was a little bruised;" she pulled off her glove, and showed us her left arm slightly grazed and contused, and gave a light significant touch to both elbow and shoulder; "but that was all. I was very fortunate."

"And your fellow-passengers? Was there nobody else in the compartment with you?"

She hesitated before answering me, as if she was not sure of the question, and I repeated it in that laboured French, which I should have liked to feel sure was as good as her English, measured and unmistakably foreign as it was.

"No," she said then; "nobody."

She had been made to sit down by this time in one of the easy-chairs, and Mary had mixed her, with her own hands, some

hot wine-and-water, which we made her drink, and which brought a little colour back into her cheeks and lips. Her cloak she would not remove, but she took off her hat and the little spotted veil, worn like a half-mask across her face, and I could feel the mingled surprise and admiration in my sister's countenance reflected in my own.

We had had governesses of all sorts and sizes at Inglewood House, but this was the first time we had enlisted the services of one who might have posed for public admiration as a professional beauty. She was so much too striking-looking that I slept little all that night thinking of it. I was always more or less afraid of a pretty pupil; one never knew the complications that might be involved, and a pretty governess was worse still. I should never have engaged Mary had she been offered to me in the latter capacity—I always told her so.

If she shared my misgivings on the present occasion, she would not allow it. She was a great lover of beauty, and from that first night she took Madame Laure under her wing, and did all she could to help her in her work, and to prepossess me in her favour. I was not predisposed in it, though I could have given no good reason for my own feeling. Her good looks worried me, I confess, and, being so handsome, I could have wished her older; it was difficult to believe that she reckoned anything like the thirty years she professed, but that was not all. She had, to my mind, neither method enough in her work, nor interest enough in her pupils' progress. Half her time she seemed to be wool-gathering, and she did not appear to understand being found fault with. She was not rude, and she did not retaliate, but she had a way of looking at me to which I was not accustomed, and which made me uncomfortable. I am tall myself, but she was taller, and I never felt myself so much mistress with her as with her predecessors. I liked to be looked up to in both senses by my governesses, and there was none of this looking up in the case of Madame Laure, so far as I was concerned. It was to Mary—Mary, who never exacted any deference from anybody—that she deferred.

It was no matter of wonder to me that my sister should attract love and veneration. There were generally three or four girls in the school who would have done anything, gone anywhere for her; but the French governess was no girl, nor would she have struck one as so likely to pay

homage as to expect it. It was not, I imagine, so much the other's kindness to her individually as the charm of her simple goodness. Whatever else madame might forget—whatever duty she might neglect—she never forgot her little attentions to "Miss Mary." However dull she might be looking, she had always a smile ready for her. My sister must, I felt, see it, and be touched by it; and, in spite of myself, a petty jealousy I was ashamed of added to my prejudice against the Frenchwoman. Mary admired her so much, and in me—I became so foolish as that, I who had never allowed my plain face to distress me before—there was nothing to admire.

When one gives way to a mean feeling of that sort, one never knows what it may lead one into, and, conscious of it in myself, I tried to shut my eyes to sundry smaller things which were not to my taste in our new inmate.

In the first place, she was not commonly neat in her dress. I did not expect her to present a fashionable appearance, or even to have very good clothes, but her rusty black garments might surely have been a trifle less short and scanty, and have made some sort of pretence at fitting her. But for her beauty and her bearing she would not have been fit to be seen.

"Cheap, ready-made mourning, no doubt," Mary said with a sigh. "How grateful we ought to be that we can afford to have things done properly and as we like!"

I was not reconciled to it, however, and I should have spoken to Madame Laure myself on the subject had she not asked me on the first half-holiday to excuse her from accompanying the pupils to South Kensington on that very account.

She really had nothing to wear, she said. Her black dresses had got so shabby, and she had not dared to spend her little money until she was earning more. Might she have the afternoon to herself to make some purchases?

I was only too glad to give her leave, though it necessitated my going with the girls myself.

Mary, who had to stay at home, came up to the bedroom after me.

"I suppose, dear, it would not do to let the poor thing have a pound or two in advance, would it?" she asked timidly.

"Certainly not," I replied promptly. "If she had wanted it, she could have asked for it. Besides, how do we know she does want it? She had left herself

something to fall back upon, to judge from what she said just now."

My sister made no further remark. She went to the wardrobe, and got out my bonnet and cloak for me, but she did not wait, I remember, as she sometimes would, to help me put them on, but went through to the dressing-room, which was more particularly her own. She had a little cabinet in there, in which she kept her dress-money—we were always most particular to keep our private accounts apart from those of the school—and I knew the click of the key in the lock quite well. It was idle to say anything. I knew that too.

By-and-by I heard her rustling softly downstairs, and before I set out myself I saw Madame Laure, waterproofed and veiled as she had been on the night of her arrival, let herself out at the garden-gate, and start at a brisk pace in the direction of the shops.

## II.

We were twenty minutes' walk from the station at Inglewood House. If I have not yet mentioned that we lived in the suburbs, I must be permitted to repair that omission now—in which suburb never mind. It was described in the prospectus as the pleasantest about town, and the healthiest, being upon gravel soil and lying high, but I do not care to particularise it here. We walked faster than usual that afternoon—the girls—about a dozen of them—Miss Crispin, the English governess, and myself. The air was clear and bright—the kind of day on which it is easy to step out: this, for one thing; for another, we were rather late. I should think Madame Laure had been gone about a quarter of an hour.

Just before you came to the station, at that time, there was a big blank wall, covered with posting bills; and as we arrived at it that day, or, rather, as our advance-guard did, they found quite a crowd collected round somebody who had been taken ill, and was being put into a cab. The road was blocked up partially, not entirely. There was room for the girls to pass, and I could not understand their stopping. The breach of discipline was explained when I got up to them. The lady who was being packed off home, having just recovered herself sufficiently to give her address, was Madame Laure.

Elsie Tanner, one of the two in front, had caught sight of her face, and been too much startled and too sympathetic to go on.

"Oh, Miss Mary, you can't think what

she looked like! She looked like death," the girl said afterwards, describing it to my sister.

I made them all stand on one side and wait, whilst I went up to the cab-door and spoke to her; the policeman, who had come to her assistance, assuring me, as I did so, that it was a wonder she had not been run over, as they had found her swooning, half on the pavement, half on the road. The only person who had seen her fall was a child of twelve or thirteen, who said she was not walking at the moment, but standing looking at the coloured pictures and reading, and that suddenly she had given a little cry and fallen backwards. There had been nobody else on the spot, apparently, five minutes before; but now there was the inevitable crowd, pushing and pressing, and craning their necks for a look at the sufferer, as though they had never seen a sick woman before. No wonder she looked scared as well as ill.

I was hesitating whether to send Miss Crispin back with her—she assured me the faintness was nearly over, and that she was liable to attacks of it, and soon got the better of them—when Elsie put in an eager request that I would entrust her with the charge; and, seeing that the girl really wished it, and that the distance was so short, I consented. It was well somebody should be sorry for the poor thing and ready to help her, and I was ashamed of myself for the irritation which possessed me with her for having made a scene in the street. I seemed to have neither heart nor conscience where Madame Laure was concerned; but there would be no lack of pity when once she got home to Mary. So I let Elsie get in with her, and watched them driven off together, not altogether happy or satisfied in my own mind either with myself or her. The people who had gathered about her, and who had been watching, open-eyed, all that was going on, began to disperse; and I was once more setting my party in motion, when one of the bystanders ran after me with a brown-paper parcel. The lady had dropped it. So said the child, who had been the only witness of her sudden seizure.

"Yes, Miss Moffatt, it does belong to madame," one of the girls said as I hesitated about taking it; "I noticed her with it when she was coming downstairs; it was too big to fit comfortably under her arm. Should you like me to take it for you, or could not we leave it somewhere?"

Decidedly I agreed it would be better to leave it somewhere, and we did leave it accordingly at the little linendraper's opposite the station, where they not only took it in, but volunteered to send it up to the house for us, and then at last we really succeeded in taking our tickets and getting off. I was flurried and put out, and the people who were in the compartment I myself got into with two or three of the elder ones—we had had to content ourselves with what places we could get—seemed to see as much, and to be, in a quiet way, amused at it. There are some lucky individuals who don't know what it means to be shaken out of their serenity by any little contretemps that may befall them; the lady who sat smiling in the far corner of the carriage, quietly taking us in from head to foot, was, I should say, one of them. She was a fair, fashionable-looking woman, with a slow, soft voice, and a drawl, and her companion, putting his sex on one side, was much after the same style. I noticed them particularly, because of the little laugh there seemed to be between them at my expense, and presently she seemed to see I was aware of it, for she suddenly straightened herself and looked away, and did not look back again.

"There was nothing in the paper," she broke the silence by saying.

"Nothing," he replied, "that you would call anything. Enough and to spare in certain columns that you don't understand—the money-market, for instance. Nothing in the way of a sensation; neither tragedy nor elopement, nor breach of promise, as far as I could see. I tell you what, though—the police are moving in that matter of the Wyvenhoe murder. There is a hundred pounds reward offered, with a full description of the woman. I saw one of the posters in the City this morning."

"That was that dreadful business down in Essex—wasn't it?" she enquired languidly. "One reads of so many horrors that one gets confused about them. People who had been living in some out-of-the-way place, and whom nobody knew anything about, and the man was found dead, and the woman nowhere to be found. That was it—was it not?"

"Yes; that was it," he replied. "There was mystery enough about the antecedents and belongings, and the life they led generally; but I should be afraid there is little enough about the murder. The woman did it to a certainty."

"Then why should you be afraid at all about it? She is pretty, I suppose, and you are sorry for her?" She said it with a laugh, in which he joined.

It might have been nothing at all—a mere jest—this ghastly crime they were talking about. The man was sorry for the miserable wretch who had committed it because she was pretty, that was all.

"I think she must have had a very hard time of it," he said. "The old woman who gave evidence, and who was the only person in the house with them, said as much. Her sympathies all went with her mistress, it was evident, and she made the case against the dead man so strong that every word she said will have helped to tighten the cord round his wife's neck, if ever they catch her, which I hope they won't. She seems to have been nothing short of a slave and a prisoner. The man must have been half mad, I should imagine, and he watched her so closely, she could not get away from him."

"And at last? I forget the particulars."

"Oh, well, there was a big row over-night, you know. The old woman heard it, as she was undressing for bed, but she appears to have gone to sleep in spite of it—too well used to the kind of thing, I suppose—and in the morning she was not up over early herself, and does not seem to have troubled about anybody else until the breakfast-hour was long past. Then she found the one room empty and the other locked, and you know the rest—all the harrowing details, as the leaders call them. The poor wretch had had a fight for his life. The fact of that, and of the door being locked on the inside, would have told in the woman's favour, if she had had the pluck to stay and see it out. But that is just where it is—presence of mind always fails people in these cases. She not only does for herself by running away, but being, according to all accounts, a good-looking woman to begin with, and remarkable enough on that score, she makes herself still more remarkable by arraying herself in a shot-silk gown. Shot-silk! only conceive it! In these days, when every other woman one meets is in black! Why, it was simply suicidal! The only wonder is they have not identified her by it before this."

"It was only the other day, surely?" she asked.

She did not look greatly interested, not so much so as I was, for we had

read about it at the time—Mary and I—had been reading about it, in fact, that very night when we were kept up watching and waiting for Madame Laure, and I could have answered her question more definitely than he did, for madame had been with us now little more than a fortnight. I was interested myself, but I was sorry to see the girls taking it all in so eagerly. We encouraged no morbid taste for horrors at Inglewood House.

"I knew—I read all about it whilst I was waiting," Milly Danvers said afterwards in her consequential little way. "I wonder you did not see it, all of you. There was 'Murder' at the top of it in big enough letters, goodness knows!"

When we reached home in the evening, Madame Laure was in bed, having so far followed my sister's advice.

"I did want her to have a doctor at first," Mary said. "But she objected so strongly, and I doubt whether it would have been of any use. I think she wants rest and quiet more than anything."

"I think you want it yourself," I said. I did not know when I had seen her look so tired and troubled; I thought at times she must feel other people's pains and aches as though they were her own, and I felt sure now she had been letting Madame Laure worry her beyond her strength. "I won't have you going up to her any more to-night," I said. "I shall go and see for myself how she is getting on, and if there is any need for a doctor, a doctor she shall have."

She did not say "Yes," or "No," but smiled faintly at the parlour boarders, who were accustomed to the occasional assertion of my authority, and began pouring out the tea, whilst I entertained the little party (the schoolroom tea was a separate affair, under the presidency of Miss Crispin) with a recapitulation of the conversation in the railway-carriage.

"It was the dress," I said, "which he had made up his mind was to bring her to justice—the shot-silk dress. My dear Mary, what on earth are you thinking of? I exclaimed in the same breath, for the urn had replenished the teapot to overflowing, and was flooding the tray, and my sister sat looking across it at me in a sort of stupor, never seeing or heeding it."

"Miss Mary was thinking no more of the tea than the rest of us," somebody said, good-naturedly coming to the rescue, and then there was a little commotion and mopping up, consequent on the catastrophe.

and Mary made her apologies, and went on with her work; but she did it nervously and badly, as if it were an effort to her, and I was glad when it was over. I scarcely knew why myself, but I was always in an agony if she had so much as a finger-ache. True, she was the one dear thing I had in the world; there was that to be said.

She would not allow that there was anything the matter with her, however, and she would go upstairs. I had rarely seen her so positive; as a rule, she gave way to me in everything connected with the school; I was so much cleverer than she, she used to say, and had a head for business, which she had not; and in the management of the governesses she never interfered. It was a mistake having two mistresses; we should never get anyone to work under us if we attempted it. But, somehow, from the first she seemed to have taken Madame Laure under her protection, and she would not let her go.

"She had such a lovely face, and she seemed out of her element and not happy; and she was so grateful for a very little kindness"—that was all the reason Mary could ever give for the attraction in the first instance.

As we took our separate ways, she to the top of the house, I to the schoolroom, I remembered the parcel madame had dropped, and which had been restored, and called up after her to know whether it had been sent home. Yes, she answered, it had. And it was quite right! Quite.

She was half-way up the stairs as she spoke, and she stopped, with a little catch in her voice, as she uttered the monosyllable, as if to rest. I ran up after her and put my arm round her.

"Mary," I said, "you are not well. Something has upset you, and I have a right to know what it is. I can't have you beginning to keep your own counsel, after all these years. I will have no Madame Laures coming between you and me, and working upon your feelings until they make you ill."

But she assured me that she was not ill, that I was mistaken—finally, with that quiet assumption of dignity with which, when she liked, she seemed able to reverse our relative positions, that such a jealousy as mine was unworthy both of me and of her, and not to be entertained for a moment.

Then she went on her way, and was closeted with the Frenchwoman for more

than two hours, in the chill and dusk of the September evening, coming down at last, white and shivering, to take her part in the prayers. Her own were long enough that night; I thought she would never come to bed, and when at last she did come, nestling gently in, so as not to disturb me, I allowed her to think I was asleep, and for the first time for years, I should suppose, let her go without her "good-night."

### III.

Madame Laure was at her post the following morning, and things went on as usual for the next few days. She excused herself from church on the Sunday, however, both morning and evening, and although she looked quite ill enough to justify her in staying at home, I could not get rid of an uncomfortable feeling that there was something in the background, and that we should never come to a proper understanding until it was cleared up. At the same time I saw in her a greater effort to concentrate her attention on her work, and whilst she spoke French with the girls more exclusively than any of her predecessors, never, indeed, expressing herself in English to anyone unless she was compelled, her knowledge of music far exceeded my anticipations.

By what seemed an unspoken mutual consent, Mary and I said little or nothing about her after that night; but the kind of devotion I had already noticed on madame's part was unaltered, and that my sister made little opportunities of seeing her in private I was better aware than she supposed. That she was trying to do her good in some way, which she was too delicate to confess to a third person, was, after all, I thought, the conclusion most in accordance with all my former experience.

We heard nothing of the Sunday's indisposition on the Monday, and that day, for the first time, she had a visitor. The lady, in the first instance, asked for me, and I was pleased not only with her, but with the object of her visit, which betokened a kindness and consideration not often to be met with in this selfish world. Had the French governess, who was on her way to us three weeks before, she wished to know, reached us safely? The fact was, she said, her husband had travelled in the same compartment with her in the tidal-train, until it was within a station or two of the spot at which the collision occurred,



when he exchanged into a smoking-carriage; and before they parted she had so interested him in her forlorn position, and had told him so much about herself, that he had promised to look her up at the terminus, and see her safely on her way to her destination.

"Which he would have done," his wife added naively, "if he had been there to do it, but he was very badly hurt. His was not one of the worst cases, by a long way. There were five deaths, you know, and one of the bodies was never identified. He was so afraid it might have been that of Madame Laura. Oh yes; she gave him her address, or I should not have known where to come to. He had concussion of the brain, and remembered nothing at first; but now he is nearly himself again, and he was so anxious about that poor little Frenchwoman, as he kept calling her, and about another lady who was in the compartment with them, that I promised I would come and see."

I could hear the girls mustering in the hall for their morning walk as she talked to me, and I went to the door and called Madame Laure in.

She obeyed the summons immediately, but, when she saw I was not alone, she fell back like a frightened child, and with an expression infinitely more distressed. Upon widely different grounds, it was easy to see that the other was scarcely less taken aback.

"But this is not Madame Laure," she exclaimed. "I mean, my husband led me to expect someone so very different!"

"Is that to be taken as a compliment to madame?" I asked.

"Yes, certainly," the little lady replied frankly. "I had no notion she was so nice-looking, or so young. He gave me the impression that you were a plain, elderly person," she added, laughing and extending her hand. "But perhaps you don't understand me, and I am not such a linguist as he is. Perhaps," and she turned to me, "you will be so kind as to act as interpreter!"

"There is no need," I said. "Madame understands English perfectly."

"Oh, well, then," she replied good-humouredly, "I will tell her," which she did forthwith.

"My husband, you see, would have done better to remain with you," she concluded. "And yet, what of the other lady—the handsome English lady who was with you?"

"I do not think she was handsome," Madame Laure replied in a slow, reluctant way. "I think—pardon me—monsieur's memory must still be a little clouded. She was not young or handsome, that poor lady. And you might not have had him spared to you, madame, had he stayed where he was, for, though I escaped, she was killed."

"Killed in the same carriage with you!" I exclaimed. "And you told me that night there was nobody with you—that you were alone!"

"Did I?" she returned apathetically. "Very likely I did. It was too dreadful to talk about. Why should I send you to your beds to be haunted as I was myself?"

The little lady went away, with her gaiety under an eclipse. She could not, apparently, get over the thought that death had really taken one of the trio, of whom her husband had formed part. She would have liked to be able to go home and tell him that with both his fellow-passengers it had been equally well.

"You must come and see us, though," she said at parting. "You will let her come—won't you?" to me.

I was willing for my part. To my surprise, Madame Laure was willing, too. Pressed to fix a day, she fixed the following Friday, and her visitor, with many apologies for having trespassed upon my time, fluttered away, leaving me for the moment tête-à-tête with my strange governess.

"You will have to take an afternoon to yourself, and get the dress you were talking about," I said to her.

She was making for the door as I spoke; at those words she turned round, and from the brightening of her face and the eagerness of her manner you would have imagined I had done, or was doing, some great thing for her.

"Might I? Would you let me—this afternoon?" she cried, and, moved by a sudden pity for her—after all, she was a stranger in a strange land, and it must be hard to be so placed as to have to ask, as a favour, for even so small a boon as this—I consented.

The girls had, of course, by this time gone out without her, and she said she would go down to the schoolroom and correct the French exercises—a task which generally stood over until the evening. I went down too, not to the schoolroom, but to the kitchen, whence, about ten minutes later, I strolled out into the garden and round

the house. Under Mary's dressing-room window I paused, hearing a voice—voices.

"On your word and honour, before Heaven—not to please me, not to make me think any better of you—remembering I might have sinned just so, had I been so tempted, and that I know it and feel it, and would do the same by you then as I am doing now—bearing all that in mind, you still say the same."

"Still the same—always the same—so help me Heaven!"

The voice was Madame Laure's, but there was something unfamiliar in the sound of it which, for the moment, puzzled me. I knew afterwards what it was; that in that, my last hearing of it, the foreign accent had gone out of it.

She took her leave of absence for the afternoon earlier than was customary—before dinner—having, my sister informed me at that meal, a long way to go. She had, indeed, a long way to go; but it was not until late that evening, after the girls had gone to bed and I was beginning to get uneasy and angry at her protracted absence, Mary ventured to tell me the truth. Then, with her arms round my neck and tears in her soft eyes, she confided to me that Madame Laure had left us, never to return.

"And oh, Esther, how am I to tell you the rest?" she cried, with such a distress in her sweet face as I had never seen there before. "How am I to tell you so as to make you believe her, and not take her for the dreadful thing they say she is? For, Esther, it was her husband whom they found murdered at Wyvenhoe; it is upon her head they have put a price, and she is as innocent—you would be as sure of it as I am, could you only have heard her!—as innocent as I!"

"Go on!" I said, staring at her in my horror and bewilderment, as if she herself were some strange thing meant to scare me. "For Heaven's sake, go on! Tell me how she got here—what brought her to us!"

"She ran away," Mary said. "That night after he beat her, whilst he lay down-stairs, as she thought, in a drunken sleep, she let herself out of the house and ran away. It was moonlight, and she made her way on foot to the nearest station, five miles off, and took the first train after day-break to some place down in Kent, where she fancied the one friend who was likely to help her was living. She spent the whole day in a fruitless search for him, and that night she slept at an inn. She had

scarcely any money, and only one hope left, and that was to get to London, and interest some charitable person in her behalf. In the carriage she got into the next morning, there was a French lady, who was coming to teach in a ladies' school near London, and there was a gentleman who was kind to them both. It was his wife who was here this morning. When he exchanged into the smoking-carriage, he ran back to them with an evening paper, and in it she read about her husband's murder and her own flight, and what people thought of her."

"And just as she grasped one horror there came the other, and the woman she had been talking to, sitting near her, was killed under her eyes!" I exclaimed. "And you, my dear, innocent Mary, believe her story. She would have come out of such an experience, had she ever come out of it at all, a raving maniac!"

My sister laid her hand on my arm, and looked with a mingling of triumph and entreaty into my face.

"Is it not just that that proves it?" she exclaimed. "If the strength that was given her had not been given of Heaven, how could she have gone through it? Would it not have seemed as if she must have been crushed? There she was, with no one to go to, no one to whom she dared tell her story, without money, without friends, and suspected of murder!"

"And there lay the dead woman, whom nobody would be likely to recognise, and whose part she thought she could play. The woman who was equal to that, Mary, was equal to what went before."

"You think so?" she said. "Oh, Esther! I am glad I did not tell you before."

"How long have you known yourself?" I asked her.

"Ever since the day she was brought home in the cab, more dead than alive," my sister answered. "She startled me by her strange talk when she came in; but it was when you told us about the dress at tea, I was seized with a presentiment of the truth. It was in the parcel you had sent home from Denyer's—that very dress—and not knowing whose it was, I had opened it. She was on her way to raise money on it," she added, with a blush at having to name such a thing, "when she saw that terrible placard, and never got any farther."

"And you went up to her, and told her you knew?"

"Yes," Mary replied quietly. "And she told me—the truth."

"And then?"

"Then I saw she must go. But I wished, if I could, to save her from desperation, and I did not see my way. The coming of that lady to-day precipitated matters, in spite of me. I saw at any moment she might be discovered, and she felt it herself, too. To-morrow morning, all well, she will wake in Belgium."

There was no need to ask whose money had taken her to Belgium. For a few days every ring at the bell startled us with the fear lest it should be a prelude to an enquiry after Madame Laure; but nobody ever came, and in time we ceased to recall her, and to watch the paper on account of her.

One day, however, about two years after, my sister received a letter from Australia, in which, along with a bank-note, was so earnest an entreaty for news of her own welfare, that she wrote to the address given her by the next mail out.

But it was only the other day that a man lying in gaol, sentenced to death for another murder, confessed that to him, and him alone, was to be ascribed the Wyvenhoe tragedy. I was rejoiced to read it, and to know at last that my dear sister's instinct—in this, as in every other instance in which we may have differed, nobler and loftier than mine—had guided her aright; but the tears fell thick and fast upon the page that recorded it, for, alas! there was no one left to rejoice with me!

No one here—visible or audible—but Mary knows!

## KATHLEEN'S LEGACY.

By C. L. PIRKIS.

### CHAPTER I.

"AND to my dear god-daughter, Kathleen O'Brien Derwent, only daughter of the Rev. Gilbert Derwent, incumbent of North Lees, in the county of Cumberland, I bequeath the sum of twenty thousand pounds, at present invested in English Three per Cent. Consols."

These were the words of Miss O'Brien's will. They were communicated by letter to the astonished legatees by Messrs. Long and Lovett, of Sackville Street, Dublin, the respected firm of solicitors who had drawn up the will, and to whose keeping it had been committed.

Kathleen was shelling peas under a big beech-tree in the parsonage garden when her brother Tom, a tall, bony fellow of about twenty, brought out the blue, official-looking letter to her.

She had on a pink cotton gown, over which she had tied the apron of their one little housemaid, in order to ward off the juicy green of the pea-pods. She had also donned a white pocket-handkerchief, Tuscan fashion, over her dark-brown curly hair, to keep off the scorching July sun. One corner of it kept flapping into her eye with every light breeze that blew past.

"I wish you would tie it under my chin," she said to Tom when he got within ear-shot. "My fingers are all green and sticky. What's that big letter? Is it your appointment to the Post Office at last?"

Tom deliberately put the letter into a standard rose-bush, a yard or so distant, and proceeded, also deliberately—Tom never did anything in a hurry—to tie the handkerchief in a good strong knot under Kathleen's chin.

"Why, your mouth is green and sticky, too!" he said. "Oh-h, look at your teeth! You've been eating the peas!"

"Why shouldn't I?" said Kathleen, looking up at him with a smile that showed the said pretty teeth to advantage. "Oh-h, you're choking me! That'll do. Now, who is your letter from?"

Tom picked the letter out of the rose-bush.

"It isn't for me—it's for you. Now, don't be in a hurry, my dear girl; it is not from him—you know who I mean. It has a Dublin postmark, and has the name of Messrs. Long and Lovett, solicitors, on the seal."

"Dublin—solicitors!" echoed Kathleen. "Who can it be from? Open it at once, Tom, or beware of my sticky fingers!"

So Tom opened it, and read it aloud, his voice with difficulty keeping an even tone as he communicated the astonishing fact of the twenty thousand pounds legacy.

Long before he reached the concluding line, "Awaiting your instructions, we remain, madam, yours obediently, Long and Lovett," Kathleen had dropped her pea-pods, and, peeping over his shoulder, had got to the bottom of the page.

They made a pretty picture, the brother and sister, with their heads so close together under the shifting shadow of the leafy beech-tree. Tom, though big and bony, was not ill-looking. His features were

well-formed, though somewhat massive—his eyes decidedly good. As for Kathleen, she was a typical brunette, of the red-lipped, clear-skinned type, with large, straightforward-looking eyes, which sometimes, though not always, recalled her brother Tom's. She was tall, too, like Tom, and, though not bony, was more inclined to be slender than plump.

Tom gave a long, low whistle as he read the last word.

"Good gracious!" cried Kathleen, her eyes opening wide and wider; and then they stood still looking at each other.

"Let's go in and tell mother and father!" exclaimed the girl, getting back her powers of speech first. "Run, Tom, just for once in your life," and she set off for the house at an altogether express speed.

"Good news will keep," said Tom composedly. But nevertheless his stride was a little longer than usual.

Mrs. Derwent was seated in the parsonage parlour with a huge heap of un-mended and very well-worn stockings in front of her. She was a small, faded woman on the wrong side of fifty, with pale eyes and a querulous voice.

"How thoughtless you children are!" she said complainingly as the two bounced in on her. "You forget how nervous I am."

"Mother, twenty thousand pounds!" cried Kathleen, waving the lawyers' letter over her head, and dancing round the room.

"Kathleen's an heiress," said Tom from behind, in a tone that made Kathleen turn round and stare at him, for there was a something in it she had never heard in Tom's voice before.

Then the father had to be told the good news.

He came creeping in from his study, spectacles on nose, the draft of a letter in his hand, at the sound of such an unusual hubbub of voices in the next room. He was a tall, white-haired man, about ten years older than his wife. It was easy to trace the good looks of his son and daughter backwards to him. Naturally he lacked their sunshiny smiles and erect carriage. Also there was about him a certain dreamy, dejected air which they as naturally lacked, but which is a thing scarcely to be wondered at in a man who, in despair of better days coming to him, marries late in life on an income of two hundred pounds per annum, and endeavours

on that microscopic sum to clothe and educate respectably a son and a daughter.

"What—what is it all about?" he asked mildly, looking over his spectacles round the room as though he expected somewhere in its corners to find the cause of the unusual merriment. "I could hardly finish my letter to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. You've positively made my head go round with your noise in here."

But when the good news had been communicated to him, his head went round faster than ever.

Then he seated himself, took off his glasses, and rubbed away at what looked like a mist upon them.

"Poor Kathleen—poor Kathleen!" he muttered half to himself, with something near akin to a sigh.

"It'll be 'rich Kathleen,' I'm rather thinking," said Tom, beginning to drum a tattoo on the table with his mother's scissors.

"Eh—what?" said his father, suddenly recalling himself to his surroundings.

"Yes—yes, of course, rich Kathleen now, not a doubt," and here he smiled cheerily up into his daughter's face. "Shall we light up bonfires to-night, and set the bells ringing—eh, Katie?"

No one in the room knew—not even his wife—that in his early college days Mr. Derwent and the deceased Kathleen O'Brien had been sweethearts, and that to this fact might be traced the pertinacity with which on the birth of his daughter he had insisted that the spinster lady in far-away Dublin should be asked to be her godmother.

"We'll give tea and cake to the whole village, father," cried Kathleen, once more clapping her hands, and dancing round the room, "and we'll all of us have new dresses, and coats, and hats, and bonnets. And you shall have a curate, father, and not wear yourself out with parish work. And you'll be able to join all those clubs you wanted to, Tom—cricket, tennis, and everything else; and you, mother, sha'n't strain your eyes any more over mending and darning old stockings!"

It was only absolute want of breath that made her pause now, and give the others a chance of putting in a word.

"Yes, a curate would be a boon—a very great boon. I'm not getting younger, and my work tells on me more every year," said the father.

"And I shall be glad to see the last of these old stockings," said the mother,

tumbling them helter-skelter into her work-basket. "I was never a good hand at needlework as a girl. I shouldn't be at all sorry to have time now and then to look at a book or newspaper."

But it was Tom's exclamation which sent Kathleen all in a hurry out of the room to look for pen and ink without another moment's delay.

"I say, Kathleen," he cried, "I wonder what Bruce will have to say to it! I suppose you'll send him a line some time to-day."

Now Bruce Aitken was the son of a lawyer at Carlisle, who had, during a recent visit to North Lees, met and fallen in love with Miss Kathleen. It was an understood thing that the two were to be married so soon as old Mr. Aitken could make up his mind to take Bruce as partner into the firm; a step he had hitherto shown a marked reluctance to take, alleging that Bruce at five-and-twenty years of age lacked the experience necessary for so responsible a position.

Most assuredly, one way or another, Bruce Aitken might be expected to have a word to say on the matter of Kathleen's legacy.

#### CHAPTER II.

BEFORE, however, Kathleen's letter had time to reach its destination, Bruce himself made his appearance at the parsonage. He swung back the little wooden gate, and came up the garden path, not only with the easy, happy air of a man who is sure of his welcome, but with an added briskness that seemed to imply that he had a piece of good news to communicate.

Mrs. Derwent watched his approach from the window of her husband's study, whither she had retired to discuss with him in quietude the event of the day. Their early dinner (eaten without the peas) was over. Tom, who for some reason best known to himself had been remarkably silent throughout the meal, had taken his fishing-rod and gone down to the trout-stream; Kathleen, who had got through an altogether brilliant amount of conversation—possibly to atone for Tom's deficiency in that respect—had also disappeared somewhere for solitude and reflection; and Mrs. Derwent, taking possession of a big Japanese paper fan (not her basket of un-mended stockings), seated herself in an easy-chair in her husband's study with an air of leisure altogether new to her.

"The Wilmots will be sorry now they did not ask Kathleen to their last dance," she began in a voice from which nervous querulousness seemed suddenly to have disappeared. Evidently her brains were speculating on the effect the astounding news of the legacy would have upon neighbours and friends when it began to be noised abroad in the parish.

Her husband, good man, was pursuing an undercurrent of thought entirely distinct from hers. He stood balancing on one finger his lately-written letter to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners—it contained an application for a grant for "much-needed repairs" to the parsonage.

"I think, after all, I won't post this letter to-day," he said, looking a little doubtfully at his wife; "I mean it's just possible, after a time, it may not suit us to stay on here." He paused a moment, and then added rather more boldly: "I mean I'm not getting younger, the work is hard, the income small—a few years of rest would prolong my life, and it would be scarcely worth while to undertake the trouble of putting this place in order for one's successor."

Mrs. Derwent did not allow the remark to interrupt her train of ideas. On they went on much the same lines as before:

"I dare say Sir Thomas Longley wouldn't have been in such a hurry to send his son out of the way to London if this money had come a month ago," she went on; "only the last time he called—when he begged me to discourage any intercourse between Kathleen and Sam, he said—'Mrs. Derwent, don't misunderstand me. Kathleen is one of the sweetest girls I have ever seen; but it's just this—the land is so heavily mortgaged through one thing or another, that unless Sam marries money, he won't be able to call an acre his own soon.' I really shouldn't be the least in the world surprised if Sir Thomas comes creeping round to-morrow directly he hears the news with something quite different to say." She paused a moment, then, letting her voice fall somewhat, added reflectively: "It's a pity Kathleen was in such a hurry to engage herself to Mr. Aitken; she might do far better for herself now."

Mr. Derwent looked up, a little surprised at this formal mention of Kathleen's lover, who had been plain "Bruce" from top to bottom of the house for the past six months. Time, however, was not given him to comment on the fact, for it was at

this precise moment that Bruce was seen swinging back the garden-gate, and the next found him in the study shaking hands with his father and mother-in-law elect.

He was a nice-looking fellow enough, smaller and more compact in build than Tom, with hair black as a raven's wing. His eyes were dark, piercing, restless; his whole physique, in fact, seemed to betoken an immense amount of pent-up nervous energy. His hand-shaking was a grip—one could fancy what a blow that same hand might deal at a pinch, it seemed all made of muscle. Mrs. Derwent generally winced under the grip, and said nothing. This afternoon she winced and said something.

"I do wish, Mr. Aitken," she said, fanning herself with great energy, "someone had taken the trouble to teach you how to shake hands, when you were a small boy."

Bruce was very penitent, and proffered no end of apologies.

"The truth of it is I'm nearly off my head to-day," he went on to say. "I've such a splendid piece of news to tell you."

"Indeed!" this said crossly and stiffly, for somehow Mrs. Derwent felt positive in her own mind what the "splendid piece of news" must be.

"I never saw her so put out before," thought Bruce; "I must have given her a grip! Never mind, my good news will bring her round right enough," so he hastened to tell it out as quickly as possible.

"Only think, Mrs. Derwent," he went on elatedly; "my father has come to his senses at last. Old Smith—that's my father's partner, you know—has done something more than usually idiotic, in fact, has made a regular bungle of some law business he had in hand, so my father has decided upon buying him out, and letting me come into the firm at once."

"Indeed!"

Bruce stared. "Indeed" from Kathleen's mother in that tone, and never a word in any tone from Kathleen's father, who had walked away to his book-shelves, taken down a bulky commentary, and now stood arranging his manuscripts at his writing-table as though, there and then, he meant to begin a sermon.

Well, someone should say something or other, civil or uncivil, he resolved. He crossed the room and laid his hand on the old clergyman's arm.

"Isn't it first-rate news, Mr. Derwent?" he cried. "Won't you congratulate me?"

"Ah, I'm delighted. I congratulate you heartily—heartily," said Mr. Derwent.

It was not said heartily, however—certainly not with the heartiness with which it would have been said had the news ante-dated Kathleen's good fortune. But then Mrs. Derwent had signalled unmistakably by her manner that for that afternoon at any rate heartiness towards Kathleen's suitor was to be laid on one side, and Mrs. Derwent's signals, by virtue of her weak nerves and querulous temper, were never appealed against in that small household.

Bruce looked blank.

"I expected——" He began and then broke off, scarcely caring in this depressed atmosphere to say exactly what he had expected—viz., that the whole family would have been ready to execute a savage war-dance over the improved state of his prospects. "I intended——" He again began, and again broke off; then with a rush brought out the sentence: "Of course, now there need be no further delay about the wedding-day, need there?"

"Wedding-days are things that should never be taken as a matter of course," said Mrs. Derwent, making now such a whirlwind with her fan that her cap-strings fluttered in it.

Bruce's face flushed a deep, angry red.

"What does it all mean? What do you wish me to understand? What has happened to make you alter so in your manner to me, Mrs. Derwent?" he asked in short, abrupt sentences.

Mr. Derwent did not like the turn matters had taken. For one thing he was unprepared for it all, and had not as yet made up his mind to any course of conduct; for another, he hated storms, and a storm evidently threatened.

He suddenly recollected a sick parishioner.

"Poor old Giles!" he cried; "I had quite forgotten I promised to read to him this afternoon. Good news must not be allowed to interfere with duty, must it?"

He waved his hand to Bruce, he smiled pleasantly at his wife as he left the room. They might refer his phrase "good news" to whichever event they pleased.

Bruce stood in front of Mrs. Derwent, waiting for his answer. She closed her fan and put her hand to her head.

"Really I think it is your manner, not mine, Mr. Aitken, which requires explanation," she said in her usual weak, querulous tone. "I have had a nervous headache all day; I am really fit for nothing but bed."

After all, weak nerves possibly ruled the world—her world, that is—better than strong ones.

Bruce grew cheerful again—brutally cheerful, one might say, all things considered.

"Oh, I'm delighted, it's a great relief—I mean of course I'm very, very sorry for your headache, but you always do suffer so much with it. Now may I see Kathleen and tell her my good luck? Shall I find her in the garden as usual?"

"You can go and look for her there if you like," said Mrs. Derwent evasively. In her own mind she felt sure Kathleen was upstairs in her own room. If so, so much the better. She would take the opportunity while Bruce searched the garden of having a short conversation—but an energetic one—with Kathleen on the preposterousness of a girl with twenty thousand pounds marrying a country lawyer, when, if she chose to take time to look about her, she might be Lady Longley, or Lady Someone higher still. Who could tell?

Kathleen, however, was not to be found in her bedroom, for the simple reason that Tom had scarcely been gone five minutes out of the house before she took her hat and followed him. Something had "put him out," she felt sure. She and Tom were always such chums, that she could not bear even the shadow of a cloud to come between them.

The trout-stream, meandering through shady meadows and low-lying land, was little more than five minutes' walk from the parsonage. This afternoon, however, it took Kathleen a good fifteen minutes to get to it. It was scorchingly, cruelly hot, the sort of day to make one think twice before putting one foot before another. Also her head was so full of thought, that quite unconsciously she lingered and loitered as one pleasant picture succeeded another in her mental vision.

First and foremost among those pleasant pictures was the thought "What will Bruce say? How will he look when I say to him, 'Bruce, only think how rich we shall be. Twenty thousand pounds! What-  
ever shall we do with such a lot of money?'"

Following this thought had come another, only by one degree less pleasant, and that was that Bruce's father now would not think his son quite such a simpleton for his choice of the poor parson's daughter for a wife, as no doubt he had done at first, for everyone knew what a keen man of

business old Mr. Aitken was, and what ambitious hopes he had cherished of Bruce marrying money and investing it in the firm.

Then on the heels of these bright fancies came a whole troop of delightful projects for the benefit and comfort of everyone around and about her. Father should have a curate, of course; that went without saying. Mother should have no end of new clothes, and another maid, who would take off her hands all the tiresome mending, and everything else in the house that was a trouble to her. And as for Tom—dear Tom—he should join all the cricket, and tennis, and rowing-clubs, far or near, that were worth joining; and if it so chanced that this appointment in the Post Office did not come for him, why, then he could wait on quietly without any fussing and fuming, and fish, fish, in the trout-stream from morning till night, as though fishing were the only thing to be done in life, as she had so often heard him say on a hot summer's afternoon he wished in reality was the case.

Strange to say, however, on this particular hot summer's afternoon, Tom did not show himself quite so eager for the "gentle sport" as was his wont. Kathleen, as she came in sight of the group of stunted willows where he usually took up his position, could see his rod and basket lying idly on the bank, and himself stretched at full length upon the reedy grass.

"It is so confoundedly hot," he muttered by way of excuse, as Kathleen came in sight, tilting his hat lower over his nose, and flicking away the flies with his pocket-handkerchief.

But Kathleen was not to be taken in. Tom, to find it too hot to fish! Not to be thought of for a moment. Besides, there was a something in his tone which reminded her of the day he had come home and told her that the eleven, of which he was captain, had been "nowhere at all" in the local cricket-match.

"I say, Tom, what is it?" she asked, kneeling down beside him on the grass under the stunted willows.

"What's what?" said Tom sententiously, and flicking away at the flies harder than ever.

"What's the matter, I mean? What has upset you, and made you so silent and gloomy on the very day we ought all to be clapping hands and going up like india-rubber balls to the ceiling?"

"Ought we? It strikes me there's only

one of us ought to be going up like an indiarubber ball."

"Only one of us!" This in an utterly surprised, altogether bewildered tone.

"Aye! Only one of us, and that one you! I don't see what anyone else has to rejoice and be glad over."

"Oh, Tom! oh, Tom!" And now an unmistakable note of pain halved the astonishment in her voice. "As if the money had not come to us all! You, me, mother, father!"

"Has it? Do you think Bruce will say that?"

"Why, of course he will!" This very indignantly. "Do you think I should ever have cared two straws for him if he didn't love you all—father, mother, you—just as well as he loves his own father, and mother, and brother?"

"H—m—m!"

"And do you think he would make any—the slightest objection even if I were to say to him, 'Bruce I don't mean to touch one penny of this money; I'm just going to hand it over to father, and mother, and Tom!'"

"Say it to him and see."

"I will—I will!" cried Kathleen, growing still more excited and indignant. "And you'll see what he'll say. I know him, I ought to—I've seen ever so much more of him than you have."

"Yes, you've seen enough of him to know him."

"Then why do you doubt what I say? Why—why? What do you mean, Tom? Why can't you take it for granted that the money will do you, and all of us, as much good as it will me? If it had been left to you, Tom, I should have taken it for granted."

"Would you? Then, you see, you are a girl—not a man."

"What difference can that make?" cried Kathleen, bound to be on the defensive, though her eyes were full of tears. "Tom, dear Tom!" she went on, "do believe me when I say the money will be as much yours as mine;" then, as Tom made no sign or response by word or look, she clasped her hands together, crying, "Oh, I do so wish—I would give worlds, if Miss O'Brien had been your godmother instead of mine, and had left you the money instead of me!"

"I wish to Heaven she had," cried Tom with a sudden energy that made his sister start back a good yard on the grass. And not for fully three minutes did she find

voice enough to ask the wondering question:

"Why, what difference would it—could it have made?"

"This," answered Tom, jumping to his feet: "I should then have had the chance of a career in life, whereas now I have none. Do you suppose," he went on vehemently, "because I am not perpetually whining over our poverty, as mother does, that therefore I do not feel the miserable narrowness and pinch of it all? Do you think it is nothing to me that I am forced to go in for a beggarly appointment in the Post Office, when all the fellows I have known here have gone on to college, entered the army, or gone in for something else fairly respectable? As I said before, you are a girl and don't understand these things. If you stood in my shoes for ten minutes, you might see what I mean."

With his last word he turned on his heel and strode away rapidly, forgetting even his rod and basket in his excitement; or it might be, perhaps, taking it for granted that his sister would pick them up and carry them home for him, as she had done more than once before in her life.

Kathleen looked after him ruefully. Tears for a moment blinded her, and she could not arrange her thoughts. It was all so puzzling, so difficult to understand. Tom had come out in such a new light. Who could have believed that, under his slow and somewhat solid exterior, he had cherished aspirations and longings such as these! Yet after all, now that the revelation had been made, it seemed almost wonderful to her that she had not guessed it all before. Of course, as Tom had said, she was a girl, and could not be supposed to understand a man's ambitions, and, of late especially, she knew that all her own ambitions had so centred in one little world, of which Bruce was the light and sun, that she had scarcely had time to give a thought to other people's aspirations. Well, there was one comfort! Tom had not expressed any outrageously impossible wish. College seemed to be the desire of his heart, and there really seemed to be no reason why it should not be gratified. She had often heard her father say he had got through his college career "on next to nothing;" very well then, out of twenty thousand pounds it must be possible to supply Tom with a sufficiency to get through his. She would go back to the house at once, and speak to her father about it.



So sunshine came back to her face. She picked up Tom's rod and basket cheerfully, and trudged along among the osiers towards home.

The stream babbled and purred over its big white stepping-stones. Splash, splash—here, there—went the shiny silvery fish. The shadows began to lengthen a little, for the afternoon was wearing itself away.

"It's nearly tea-time," thought the girl. "Bruce will be just about locking up his office and thinking of getting home. And to-morrow morning he'll have my letter, and know all about it, and of course he'll come down immediately, and——"

But here her thinking was suddenly cut short by the shadow of Bruce himself falling athwart her path. He was coming along with his usual brisk energy, but Kathleen's quick eyes detected an unusual but unmistakable cloud upon his brow.

"Why, Bruce—you!" she cried.

Then there followed—no, not hand-shaking, but its equivalent under certain conditions. Why not? There was no one to tell tales, beyond the bending osiers, the whispering reeds, the wild, flitting birds.

Bruce began a whole string of questions:

"What's the matter with Tom? I met him just now, and he told me where I should find you; but beyond that, never a word could I get out of him."

"Tom and I have had a tiff. We often have tiffs, you know," answered Kathleen, bent on being loyal to Tom's infirmities.

"Is that why you're carrying his rod and basket for him? Give them to me, dear. Really I think you're determined to spoil that brother of yours; the effects of your injudiciousness are beginning to show in him. Well now, Katie, what's up at the house—with your father and mother, I mean? There's something there wants explaining too, I think."

Then Kathleen's face brightened all over as she answered:

"Oh, there's ever so much to explain. I wrote to you at once; it doesn't matter; you'll get my letter when you go back. Let's sit down here under this willow. I've a wonderful letter from a lawyer in my pocket I want you to read. You are not to speak one word till you've got to the last line; and I am going to sit here on this tree-stump right in front of you and watch your face while you read. I'm sure it'll be something to remember for ever and ever afterwards."

And Bruce's face as he sat reading the lawyer's letter was something to remember for ever afterwards, though not exactly in the way Kathleen expected, for instead of flushing red with a glad, jubilant surprise, it grew white, hard, frowning. His lips set, and with never a word he folded the letter, and gave it back to the girl.

"Why, Bruce, what is it? Are you ill?" she cried, jumping up from her tree-stump.

"I see—I see; I understand it all," he muttered half to himself. "The whole thing stands explained now."

"What stands explained?" she asked, ready to cry with mortification and disappointment. "I thought you at least would jump, and clap your hands, and toss your hat up in the air, and there you take it every bit as solemnly as Tom."

"I don't see much to clap my hands over, Kathleen," he answered gravely. "I rejoice at your good fortune, of course, but——"

"My good fortune!" she interrupted passionately. "Isn't my good fortune your good fortune too? What does it all mean? Tell me—tell me!" and then she hid her face in her hands, and, sitting by his side among the osiers, burst into tears.

Of course he did his best to comfort her.

"I can't tell you anything if you sob like that, Kathleen," he said. "Will you try to listen while I explain to you why I don't jump up and clap my hands with delight? Well, it's just this: before I came out here to you, your mother gave me to understand that I was not welcome to the house; your father gave me the cold shoulder; your brother looked black as thunder at me. Now do you expect me to clap my hands and toss up my hat with delight over that?"

Kathleen's astonishment dried her tears.

"Not welcome—cold shoulder—black as thunder!" she repeated blankly.

"I mean what I say, and I understand now exactly why it is. The lawyer's son might be a very good match for the parson's daughter, but a young lady with twenty thousand pounds has a right to look a little higher."

"Oh, impossible—impossible!" cried the wondering Kathleen. "It's all a mistake—it must be a mistake! Why, only yesterday, mother said to me, 'Kathleen, I think you are a very lucky girl. There never lived a better fellow than Bruce Aitken.'"

"Ah, that was yesterday, you see. Something has happened since then."

"What has happened? Nothing that ought to make any difference. Oh, that wretched, wretched legacy! I wish it had never come to make us all so miserable!"

"And so do I," said Bruce with great energy. "Katie, do you know I came over with good news this afternoon! My father has at last consented to take me into the firm, and, of course, under ordinary circumstances, there would be nothing to prevent our getting married at once—next week—to-morrow, if it could be managed. But now——"

He broke off abruptly. Bruce was not a man to break down with emotion, but he was evidently keeping his calmness with difficulty.

Kathleen's face went from red to white—from white to red.

"Oh, Bruce—oh, Bruce!" was all she could find breath for at first. Then something akin to indignation took possession of her. "We to be sitting here in this dismal fashion, moaning and groaning, when we ought to be dancing and singing! Why, it's unheard of! No one would believe it!" she cried.

Bruce made no reply. He was thinking deeply over something that would not bear a divided attention.

Presently he woke up to ask the question:

"Kathleen, how old are you?"

"Exactly nineteen and two months," answered Kathleen promptly. "You don't mean to say you've forgotten already the beautiful cake I made on the 20th of May last!"

"No, dear, I had not forgotten, but I was in hopes I had made a mistake in a year, and you were turned twenty!" He gave a heavy sigh. "You see you are so young to be allowed to have your own ideas on this matter, people would think I had taken advantage of your inexperience."

Kathleen grew suddenly white. She knelt down beside him as he sat, looking up in his face.

"You don't mean to say you are thinking of giving me up, Bruce?" she asked in a low voice.

"No," said Bruce with decision; "but it's only right you should have the choice of giving me up if you liked. People would think that at nineteen such a choice should not be allowed you—that, in fact,

your father and mother should make it for you."

"Bruce, if father and mother and all the world were to say I must give you up, I wouldn't do it!" This said in the same low tone as before, but there could be no mistaking the decision put into it.

And somehow her hand crept into his as she said the words, and somehow their eyes met, and then—well, the whispering reeds, the bending osiers, the wild, fitting birds might have had another idyllic story to tell had voices and words been lent them for a brief five minutes.

Mr. Derwent stood leaning over his garden-gate looking down the shady lane which led straight to the trout-stream. The shadows had lengthened very much now; the red roof of the square old parsonage was glorified by a passing gleam from the sinking sun; birds were getting up their good-night notes, a whole orchestra of buzzing insects were tuning up for their twilight madrigals. He had read old Giles to sleep, and another old parishioner after Giles. He had enjoyed a second tête-à-tête with his wife, which she had brought to an abrupt ending by declaring that her poor head was racking her again, she must go to bed at once, but "of course you'll make young Aitken clearly understand, my dear, the footing things will be on in the future."

Mr. Derwent was not quite in his usual placid, quiescent frame of mind. Left to himself he would have preferred that things should take their course, and arrange themselves. His wife, however, had informed him with unmistakable decision that certain responsibilities rested on his shoulders now, which he must not try to shift upon anyone else's. So he stood there bracing his muscles to the task, timing the unconscious lovers with his big chronometer, and trying to persuade himself, as his wife had reminded him again and again during their half-hour's talk, that he was only going to perform what his duty as a father demanded of him; that Kathleen was but a child, and must not be allowed to have an opinion on the matter; that Bruce was a most reasonable fellow, and would be sure at once to see things in a right light.

"I have been waiting here to have a few words with you, Bruce," he said as the two came slowly along the path to the gate, looking, as even his short-sighted eyes noted, very unlike their usual buoyant, light-hearted young selves. "We can talk

out here just as well as indoors. Kathleen, my dear, Tom is waiting for his tea; you had better go in at once."

But Bruce was not at all disposed to have matters settled in this offhand fashion. In his own mind, and talking it over with Kathleen, he had arranged his course of procedure in the future, as they had come up the shady lane, swinging Tom's rod and fishing-basket between them. Mr. Derwent should stand there and listen to his terms, not he to Mr. Derwent's.

He laid his hand on Kathleen's arm.

"There is no reason why Kathleen should not hear every word, Mr. Derwent; we know exactly what you are going to say," he said, looking very white, it is true, but with no sign of wavering in his voice. "We know you are going to talk about Kathleen's legacy, and say how ridiculous it would be for her now to marry a man in my station in life. Very well. I am not going to force myself upon her, I'll tell you that; but I also tell you I'm not going to give her up because a few thousand pounds have fallen to her; I wouldn't have given her up for poverty, and I won't give her up for riches. But this I will do—let her have her own choice on the matter without attempting to influence her in any shape or form. And because she is too young now to be allowed to make such a choice, I will wait for it till her twenty-first birthday—about a year and ten months from now. On that day, whatever her decision may be, I shall take it as final—a 'yes' or a 'no' for ever."

Bruce's words had come one after the other clearly, but hurriedly. He drew a long breath as he finished speaking. Then under her father's eye he took her in his arms and kissed her.

"Good-bye, Kathleen; without fail you'll see me on your twenty-first birthday," he said in not quite such a steady voice as before. And Kathleen's "good-bye" seemed to come in oddly muffled tones, while a mist before her eyes made her think the twilight had come upon them all of a sudden.

"Oh yes, I'll shake hands, Mr. Derwent," Bruce said, as the old clergyman somewhat doubtfully held out his hand; "I can see things, in a fashion, from your point of view, but you must forgive me if I can see them better from my own."

Then, as though afraid to trust himself with another look at Kathleen, he turned sharply round, and walked hurriedly away.

Mr. Derwent and Kathleen went back to

the house by different paths. Mr. Derwent got in first, retreated to his study, and locked himself in, horribly afraid lest Kathleen should pursue him, and make a scene. Kathleen lingered a few minutes in the failing light, trying to get back her calmness before she faced Tom and the tea-tray. There under the big beech-tree was her basket of peas, off which an audacious jackdaw was making an easy and pleasant supper. Could it only have been this morning, the girl asked herself, that she sat there with nimble fingers and a merry heart, telling herself such pleasant tales of what the years had in store for her? Why, she seemed to have lived since then a decade at least. Well, the fates had with the first post that morning just turned her life upside down for her—that was all: had given her twenty thousand pounds with one hand, and had robbed her of her lover with the other.

### CHAPTER III.

MRS. DERWENT slept off her nervous headache, and came down to breakfast the next morning in the smartest cap and gown her wardrobe had at command.

"My dear, you look twenty years younger," said her admiring husband, as he took his place behind the eggs and bacon.

Mrs. Derwent smiled pleasantly at him across the tucked-up sleeves of the little maid who was bringing in the teapot.

"You needn't bring my work-basket after breakfast," she said, addressing the Phyllis a little pompously. "Those stockings are really past mending, and may as well be given to the almshouse people."

Tom came in, bringing the letters which the postman had just handed to him over the garden-gate. He was scowling tremendously—Tom could look black if he chose—at the uppermost one, addressed to him in official writing, and announcing itself in printed letters to be "on Her Majesty's service." Not a doubt it must be the long-talked-of nomination to an inferior billet in the General Post Office.

Kathleen, occupied in cutting brown bread on a trencher, seemed to feel his black looks, for she did not so much as lift her eyes as she said:

"Why trouble about it now, Tom? Put it in the waste-paper basket. Father, why can't Tom go to college like other young men, instead of beginning to work at something he detests?"

Kathleen had had a sleepless night, and

the thoughts that had kept her awake had not been pleasant ones. A year and ten months seems an altogether interminable period to a girl of nineteen under any circumstance, but when the said year and ten months is to comprehend in its lagging weeks an utter suspension of pleasant intercourse with one who has grown to be part of the girl's very life, it of necessity doubles and trebles itself. Kathleen, however, did not see in her own heavy heart any excuse for an endeavour to make other people's hearts heavy. Without being one step on the road towards canonisation as a saint, she was yet one of those "gay, good girls" whose whole delight is to make people and things around them sunshiny, not expecting so much as a "thank you" in acknowledgment.

Mr. Derwent looked up from his plate, surprised, but not displeased; Mrs. Derwent looked up from hers, neither surprised nor displeased. Tom, it may be remarked in passing, was her favourite child.

"It is exactly what I expected you would say, Kathleen," she said in a tone that suggested a combination of honey and treacle.

All Tom's frowns vanished in an instant, like ghosts at the dawn.

"Come out in the orchard after breakfast, Kathleen," he cried cheerily. "I'll swing you all the morning in the old apple-tree!"

Now if there was one thing in life that Kathleen enjoyed more than "sweeties"—Turkish delight, bull's-eyes, toffee, and such like—it was a swing on a summer's day. As a rule she jumped at the offer of Tom's services—he did not volunteer them very often, it must be admitted—to-day, however, she shook her head.

"I've so much to do in the house," she began apologetically.

"My dear," interrupted her mother, "you must be relieved from some of your home-duties now. Your education has not been altogether what your father and I should have liked. You must set to work at accomplishments of some sort at once."

Kathleen dropped her bread-knife in her amazement.

"What!" she cried, round-eyed; "do you mean I am to go to school—at my age—nearly twenty?"

"Here's a letter for you, Kathleen," said Tom, anxious to effect a diversion, for Kathleen and her mother were apt to—well, say "differ" on not a few subjects.

But he could not refrain from giving it

a somewhat vicious look as he tossed it across the table to her, for the adhesive seal, with the names of Messrs. Long and Lovett upon it, stirred again the smouldering embers of his discontent of yesterday.

Kathleen put her letter beside her plate unopened, and sat down in silence to her breakfast. She, too, could not refrain from giving the harmless envelope a passing vicious look, though the "viciousness" of her look assuredly sprang from a different source from Tom's. There it lay, the ugly blue paper thing, with the round, business-like writing, and aggressive-looking seal. How unlike the missives which, as a rule, were to be found lying beside her breakfast-plate, addressed to her in Bruce's small, sharp-pointed writing! Ah, when would she again have one of his dear, darling old letters to make her eat her breakfast in one mouthful, so that she might run out into the garden and read it in peace, with none but the thrushes and blackbirds to take note of her smiles and her blushes?

She could not eat her bread-and-butter, but kept drinking the hot coffee with gulps, as though with it she would swallow down her sorrows.

Tom looked at the unopened letter.

"How can you keep your fingers off it? Here's a girl devoid of inquisitiveness for once in a way!" he cried sarcastically.

The mother looked at the letter.

"Business letters should always receive immediate attention," she said sententially.

And the father looked at the letter.

"The post goes out at eleven, Kathleen; better open it at once, it may want an answer," he suggested mildly.

So Kathleen broke the seal, and for one moment let her eyes wander carelessly, indifferently, down the closely-written page.

Only for one moment, however; the next, with a cry that in itself was as good as a peal of wedding-bells, she had let it fall to the ground, had overthrown her chair, and shaken all the eggs on the table out of their cups in her eager haste to get out of the room.

Tom, father, mother, all rose tumultuously to their feet.

"What is it—what is it? Are you mad, Kathleen?" cried Mrs. Derwent in her astonishment, altogether forgetting her own weak nerves.

"Mad! oh no," cried Kathleen, half up the stairs on her way to her room; "only

happy! I'm not an heiress, after all, and I'm going to write and tell Bruce this very minute."

Tom, father, and mother, all looked blankly in each other's faces.

Tom was the first to get his senses together. He picked up the lawyer's letter from the floor, and then read aloud in the bland, legal language, which seemed to insinuate apologies for the disagreeable truth it had to convey, how that the executors nominated by the late Miss O'Brien in her will, had declined to take upon themselves the responsibility of administering to the deceased lady's estate, for the simple reason that no estate remained to administer to. At the period when the will had been drawn up, Kathleen's legacy, no doubt, with other moneys, was invested in Three per Cent. Consols. Since then Miss O'Brien had not received one penny from her landed property in Ireland, and had consequently been compelled, in order to keep up her house and staff of servants, little by little to draw upon her capital, till of the large sum at one time invested only a few hundreds remained — an amount, indeed, barely sufficient to cover the expenses of her costly funeral, and discharge outstanding debts in the neighbourhood. The lawyers concluded their letter with polite expressions of regret for the untowardness of the circumstances.

Tom dropped the letter with a groan as he finished reading it. "Those fellows ought to have thought twice before they wrote in such a hurry to offer their professional services," he growled, and then went down on his knees, rummaging in the waste-paper basket for the letter containing his nomination to the Post Office billet, which he had so carelessly jerked into it.

Mrs. Derwent burst into a flood of hysterical tears. "It was wicked! wicked! They ought to be prosecuted," she sobbed.

Then she put her hand to her forehead, adding plaintively, "I'll go up to bed, I think; I can't keep my head up." But there was real tragedy in her tone when, as she left the room and met the Phyllis coming in, she turned and said to her: "Don't give away those stockings I spoke to you about this morning. They'll stand a little more mending and wearing."

And Mr. Derwent went slowly into his study, to re-write his letter to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners asking for a grant for the much-needed repairs.

"It's a bitter disappointment, of course," he said to himself with a sigh, as he got out his pens and paper; "but still it is nice to see the old bright look in Kathleen's face."

As for Kathleen herself, it was only her tears of joy, falling thick and fast and half blinding her, which made her take more than sixty seconds over her brief letter to her lover.

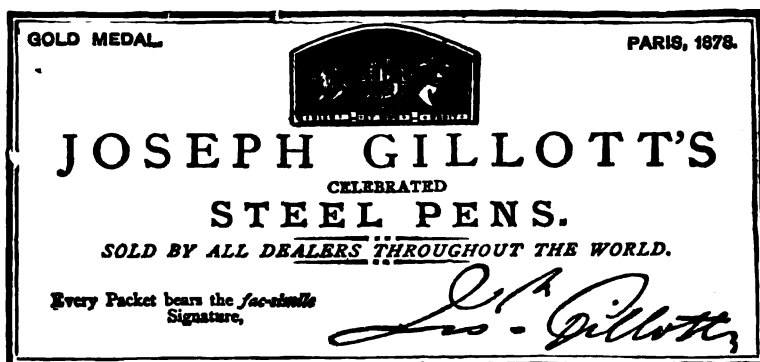
"DEAR, DEAR BRUCE,—Isn't it delightful? I'm not an heiress, after all. Come over at once—this very minute.—Your own  
KATHLEEN."

This was all she wrote. But it was evidently enough, for it brought Bruce to the parsonage the very next day; and, before he went back to Carlisle, the day was fixed for their wedding.

"I wish I could fancy it was nothing more than a bad dream," said the girl, as she said good-bye to her lover over the garden gate; "but, somehow, I can't. When I think over it all, I feel exactly as I did when I ate that Seville orange, and had a bitter taste in my mouth for days afterwards."

Poor child! This was her first taste of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, of which most of us have to eat a little more than we relish through life.

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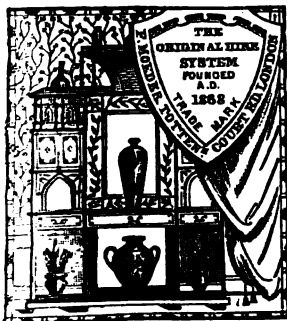
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BY MAY DRYDEN.

### CHAPTER XXIV.

THEY were supposed to be worshipping the masterpiece by Whistler. Long Tom, of Dale's Brow, was there—Thomas Brent when he got his full name—and old Ben Crossley. These two were the centre of a group of working-men who, gathered together in Miss Watkins's æsthetic night-school, were eagerly discussing something which was certainly not art.

Long Tom was a fine, handsome young fellow of about four-and-twenty, taller and straighter than the ordinary Lancashire weaver. His face was not wanting in intelligence, but its expression was marred by a certain sullen obstinacy about the mouth. Mentally, he was a fair type of a Lancashire working-man, whose shrewdness of mind and readiness to form his own opinion generally outstrip the knowledge necessary for the right guidance of those qualities.

Old Ben Crossley was a small, wizened, bent man of about fifty, of a surly temper and vicious, spiteful disposition. The group that surrounded these two was composed mainly of lads and young men. There were between thirty and forty of them, a number which, at first sight, argued very well for the attractions of the masterpiece by Whistler.

Long Tom was haranguing the audience.

"Yo' poor, deaun-trodden fools," he was saying. "Dun you call yo'rsel's men, and winnot yo' bear wi' a bit o' clemmin' to get yo're rights? Eh, but I am asheamed to know yo' for men o' Lancashire."

"Very pretty talkin', Tom," called one from the background. "But can yo' tell me whoi, lad, we should want to be fightin'

hold our peace. We'n gotten a fair wage and a good measter, and what more dun we want?"

"It's not far ahead 'ut yo' con see," cried Tom contemptuously. "A good measter! Eh! He is good neaw. Yo' wait a bit until he's gotten us aw under his thumb. Besides, oi conna see 'ut he's that good. Dun yo' know what's happened to Lame Luke o' Bradshaw's?"

"No."

"Well, yo're good measter's turned him off because the poor fellow took a drop too much one day to dreawn his sorrow." Here Tom began to speak very fair English, as he often did when he meant to be impressive. "Turned him off to die in a ditch for aught my proud young master cares. For what can a poor lame lad do to earn his living?"

There was a murmur of indignation, and then a strong, quiet voice spoke up:

"Now, lad, thou known that thou'rt leein'!"

"Who dares to say I'm leein'?" cried Tom angrily. Then, his wrath subsiding a little as he caught sight of the speaker, "Well, Mr. Leighton, is it not true?"

"Not as you've spoken it, lad. This was th' way o't: Lame Luke's been drinkin' off and on for a long time, and th' measter spoke to him about it often. Luke took no manner of heed, so then Fenchurch said he'd have no drunkards in his mill settin' a bad example to th' young folk. So he turned him out, but not to die in a ditch, lad. He's got him th' place o' gate-opener at th' Park, and Lame Luke earns two shillings for every one he got before. Yo' know he's not that lame, after all."

"That's a very different mak' o' a tale," said someone, and even Long Tom looked a little ashamed. But old Ben Crossley

"Aye! and yo' will hear a different tale from Leighton abeawt Fenchurch than what yo' would from another. We all know very well 'ut Leighton, or some 'ut belongs to him, are i' high favour i' thot quarter."

"What do you mean?" demanded Tom.

"Eh, dunnot slay me, Tom. We all known yo're sweet i' that heawse yoursel'. But bless me, lad, yo're safe enow. He'll ne'er marry th' lass."

Here his eloquence was suddenly cut short, for Isaac Leighton, laying a strong hand on his collar, shook him as a dog would a rat, and then hauling him to the door, thrust him out, with an admonition to keep his mischief-making old tongue quiet if he meant to have a sound bone left in his skin. Then returning to the room he spoke sharply and sternly to the little meeting, to the effect that they were all set on getting into mischief, and the sooner they left off talking nonsense the better it would be for them. How could they, he asked, ever hope to get a real grievance redressed if they were always trumping up imaginary ones? Having said his say he departed homewards, perplexed by a sense of the utter futility of his good advice. He knew well enough the aims of those who were agitating in Wilton for a strike, knew that they had been successful in other towns and villages in the neighbourhood, and feared that they might be so there.

"If it were only Mr. Gordon," he thought to himself, "they could not find ground for a quarrel with him. But there is Mr. Mark; he sets them all by th' ears whenever he comes over, with his proud, not-understanding ways. Eh, but old Ben is the very devil. Tom'll hate Mr. Gordon for life now. Shall I tell th' lass, I wonder? I think not. There's nowt in't. What use to sheame her?"

However, in spite of his perfect faith in his daughter, Isaac made up his mind to watch her pretty closely for the future.

Meantime the meeting at the night-school was broken up by the arrival of Mrs. Watkins and her daughter, clad in the most approved shade of peacock-blue, to exercise their saving influence over these rough, untamed specimens of the human race. This evening Anastasia had brought with her a large bunch of daffodils, which she proceeded to distribute singly among the young men, who received them for the most part awkwardly enough.

Long Tom, however, took his with a very fair imitation of the absurd air of

admiration he had seen caricatured in Punch. He attended Gordon's reading-room regularly, and the comic papers were a part of the entertainment provided for its habitués.

Mrs. Watkins looked on him approvingly, and on the others hopefully. Her work of ameliorating the condition of the lower classes was progressing very favourably, she thought, since in one month she had taught this young man to appreciate the beauties of nature as exhibited in a daffodil, and the wonders of art as portrayed by a Whistler.

"What," she asked, "were you all discussing so eagerly as we came up? You must learn to moderate your voices, my friends."

The rest by common consent left Tom to speak for them.

"We were talking of Mr. Gordon Fenchurch," said he, "and of poor Lane Luke!"

Then he repeated his tale, adding to it such touches as he thought would lend it interest and pathos in the ladies' eyes. Since old Ben's hint, Tom's anger against Gordon had grown into positive hatred. All such feelings of honour or fair play as the young man had possessed were sunk in the desire to do his employer some lasting injury. Unfortunately his hurtful seed now fell into good ground for its growth.

Mrs. Watkins was a Christian woman, and so she never hated anyone—would, indeed, have been shocked had anyone suggested that so unrighteous a feeling as hatred could have any place in her mind—but she disliked Gordon Fenchurch extremely, and though she would have denied vehemently any desire to do him an injury, she was undoubtedly pleased to hear anything to his disadvantage.

The grounds of her dislike were manifold. In the first place, she regarded him with horror as one who would do away with all distinctions of classes; secondly, he would not betray any sensitiveness to the allurements of her daughter Anastasia, who, she had made up her mind, was the very person to exercise over him the influence he so much needed; thirdly, his sister Clarence had rejected all Anastasia's efforts to become intimate with her—treating her, it is true, with the utmost politeness, but reserving all her friendship for those common, vulgar girls, the Carfields, whose heads were being quite turned by the notice that was taken of them, so that they were no longer properly grateful for the patronage and instruction which Mrs. Watkins was ever willing to bestow.

Thus it came about that Mrs. Watkins heard the tale concerning Gordon Fenchurch and Lame Luke o' Bradshaw's with delight, and, artistically working it up, and unconsciously adding whatever was necessary to give it point, had, in the course of a week, carried it into every house in Wilton where she had admittance.

She met Phoebe Carfield out walking, and stopped to tell her of it, and Phoebe astonished her by blazing up—the meek Phoebe—almost as though she had been Matilda. She did not believe a word of the scandal, and told Mrs. Watkins so. But she went home and cried over it all the same, and tried to summon up courage to speak to Gordon about it, and, coward that she was, could not manage it.

Then Mrs. Watkins added the story of her indignation to the rest, and everywhere led people to suppose that Phoebe was trying to induce young Fenchurch to marry her, that he had noticed her until she fell in love with him, but that he was, nevertheless, much too shrewd a man of business to marry an insignificant girl like that, without a penny to her fortune. That was what she led people to suppose. Mrs. Watkins was a Christian, and never gossiped, or spoke ill of her neighbours, and she would not have said it right out for the world. She told the story of Lame Luke only from a stern sense of duty—because it was right that the truth should be told.

And, wherever she went, Anastasia went also, and every time the mother told the story, the daughter confirmed people's idea that there must be something in it by her seeming reluctance to be questioned on the matter, and her grief that it should have been spoken of at all.

Ah me! What a world of mischief one malicious woman can make!

#### CHAPTER XXV.

ISAAC LEIGHTON had acted wisely in resolving to say nothing to Deborah about old Ben Crossley's hint with regard to herself.

He appreciated the beauty of his daughter's very superior character, and by that appreciation showed that it was to some extent derived from himself.

He knew that she admired both Gordon and Clarence, and sympathised in her admiration. If, in the depths of her heart, there were some feeling stronger still for her master, he would have been as loth as Deborah herself to tear aside the veil

of reticence in which she shrouded it, and expose it to the light of day.

Though silent on that point, however, he consulted with Deborah as to what might be the best means of counteracting the meddlesome mischief-making of Long Tom and old Ben.

Isaac had watched many strikes through their woful courses from beginning to end, and he knew well how the seeds of discontent are first sown by the half-educated, short-sighted zealot, how he then carefully nourishes them, and how, when they are ripe to harvest, he brings forward his carefully-concerted plan of action, so that a strike, and often worse, is the result.

Isaac feared more than a strike just now, for the people were in an exceedingly turbulent state in all that countryside. Strikes had in many instances been followed by destruction of property or by violence and bloodshed. More than one large manufacturer, whose mills were closed, dared not sleep at night without a guard of police to patrol his grounds, lest his house should be surrounded and burned under cover of the darkness.

Deborah blushed when her father named Long Tom. That worthy had persecuted her with his addresses since as boy and girl they had attended school together. Indeed, his admiration of Deborah was the most amiable trait in this gentleman's character. By every uncouth method in his power he endeavoured to win some expression of regard from his deity, and, failing altogether, failed also to understand his failure. For Long Tom was something of a hero amongst his own class, and very much of a beau. In fixing his affections upon Deborah Leighton he had unwittingly allowed them to be engrossed by the only lass in Fenchurch's mill, who would not willingly "walk with him o' Sundays" as the Lancashire phrase runs; that important walk on Sunday evenings being the sign whereby the Lancashire lads and lasses recognise an engaged couple.

Deborah's confusion, however, was soon merged in her distress at the news her father brought.

"What must we do, lass?" asked he gently, watching to see if his daughter's thoughts followed the same channel as his own. "It seems to me it's thou and I alone against all the rattlepates i' th' neeborhood. But there's some on 'em would be easy guided by a word fro' thee." He paused and hesitated, then went on: "Could yo' speak to Long Tom, lass?"

Deborah blushed again and answered firmly, though without displeasure :

"Nay, father. He'd happen think I meant more'n I said."

"I doubt thou'rt right," said Leighton despondently. "What must we do?"

"See," said Deborah, "there's our Minnie coming up the garden. Call her in, father, and let's hear what she has to say about it."

"I'll send her in to thee," said Isaac.

He was a sober-minded man, having on his father's side Quaker blood in his veins, and his younger daughter's flighty manners and high spirits irritated him beyond endurance — for this reason, he avoided frequent intercourse with her. Minnie, beautiful little butterfly that she was, certainly stood in wonderful contrast to Deborah, and a man who admired the elder sister could scarcely be expected to appreciate the younger.

The latter came into the room gaily singing one of the songs from the pantomime last performed in Homcester. There was no harm in the ditty, but it was slangy and foolish, and Deborah's brows contracted slightly as she heard it. She made no remark about it, however. She rarely blamed her sister. Now she returned affectionately the warm kiss with which Minnie greeted her.

"Eh, but it's warm," said the new comer, throwing off her shawl. "Well, Debby, what ails thee? Thou looks as grave as th' owd church-clock when it's striking twelve."

"Why twelve, little one?" asked Deborah, smiling.

"Clock's loike other folk. It looks graven when it's got most to say. I know thou's gotten summut to say, now hasna' thee?"

"Aye, I've been hearing bad news, Minnie."

"An' I've been hearin' good news," answered Minnie lightly. "I picked 'em up outside o' th' new æstetic night-school."

"Æsthetic," corrected Deborah gently.

"Ne'er mind. It's aw th' same. What'll thee gi' me for my news?"

"I'll give thee mine instead, dear."

"Bad news for good! That's a poor exchange, I doubt. But hearken, Debby. Theer's goin' to be grand doin's in Wilton. We're aw to turn cawt next month."

"Minnie! Do you call that good news?"

"Yes, I do. I've ne'er seen a strike, and it'll be fine fun playin' us. So now! Long Tom tow'd me. He said I cou'd tell

yo', but theer's not many knaws yet. Yo' mustn't tell, Debby."

"But, Minnie, it's dreadful," remonstrated Debby. "Whatever can folk want wi' turnin' out now, when times are mendin' so nicely?"

"To get our rights!" said Minnie proudly, and evidently repeating a lesson that had been taught her. "To get our rights, and to teach an unjust master that we will not be his slaves!"

Deborah recognised the tone of the speech.

"Oh, Minnie, Minnie!" cried she. "Have you been listening to Tom?"

"Aye, have I, and paying heed to him, too. Why shouldna' I listen to Tom? Will yo' neither tak' him yoursel' nor let another tak' him?" cried Minnie impetuously, flushing up to the roots of her hair.

Deborah stood astonished. Only last Sunday Tom had been pestering her with his attentions; could he really have veered round, and become attached to Minnie since then? Or did he think to make her, Deborah, jealous by courting her sister?

"Minnie dear," said she gently, "I am so sorry."

"What for, then?"

"He's not good enough for you, little one."

"He is good enough," cried Minnie indignantly. "An' yo're th' only lass in Wilton that would not be proud to say 'aye' to him, Debby. An' for aw thou'rt so good, oi cannot think thou'rt too good for him, Debby; an' though oi'm poor beside o' thee, if he'll ha' me i'stead, he shall."

"Do you love him then, Minnie?"

Minnie's answer was to fling herself on her knees at her sister's side and exclaim, amidst a torrent of tears :

"I love him, love him, love him, Debby! Oh, Deborah, I've loved him aw th' time he's been courtin' thee, and my heart's been nearly broke because thou wouldna' please him an' I couldna'. An' now, he says, his eyes are opened, an' he loves thee no more; it's me 'at he really cares for. An' it's like heaven!"

What could Deborah do, save soothe her little sister, and sympathise in her joy, even while recognising with sinking heart the fact that Tom was stealing her beautiful young love and giving her only words in return?

Now was not the time to remonstrate with Minnie concerning the strike. In her present state of mind she would not be

likely to hear with patience anything contrary to the teaching of her lover.

Poor Minnie! She was very weak-minded, very blind, or she would surely have doubted the affection which could so readily be transferred from one sister to the other.

Meantime Deborah could do nothing but watch the signs of the time, and when she was able, say a word to allay the growing excitement of the people. But she could do very little to guide them now. Long Tom was the favourite of the moment, and he had the ear of the people. Moreover, she was fighting in the dark against she knew not what, for all the plans of the agitators were kept very quiet.

Night after night the masterpiece by Whistler looked down upon a meeting of angry, excited men and boys, with now and then a woman amongst them, more eager to strike some telling blow than they. Ignorant folk were they all, willing to thrust themselves into any peril to gain some very vague advantage, supposing that all was clear to their leaders. They were easily swayed by any orator who, for a moment, had power to hold their attention, running headlong into mischief, many of them purely for want of some harmless and rational way of filling up their spare time and exhausting their superabundant energy.

South-country people are fond of talking disparagingly of this Lancashire of ours; judges on circuit are shocked by the horrible cases of cruelty brought before them, and speak with horror of a brutality unparalleled in the southern counties. No doubt they are right in their judgment of our crime, but they, in common with ourselves, trace it to a wrong source. Blame if you will, where blame is so richly merited, but not the poor brute who, in a fit of drunken passion, kicks the wife, scarcely better than himself, to death. Judge those who make him what he is, or keep him so; judge the rich, cultivated, refined young men and women, who from their superior heights look down upon their struggling brothers and sisters with a kind of languid disgust, and will not take the trouble even to realise the lives they live, much less hold out a saving hand to them!

Day by day fresh tales were circulated concerning Gordon and Clarence, which being, one and all, detrimental to their characters—albeit as false as that of *Lame Luke*—met with a ready acceptance. Even these rarely came to Deborah's ears. Not

one in ten of the people who repeated them believed in them, and there were very few who dared to carry a falsehood within the hearing of Deborah Leighton or her father.

Tom continued to make violent love to Minnie, who, poor child, believing implicitly all he said, moved in one long dream of delight. He watched eagerly the while for any symptoms of jealousy on the part of the elder sister, and when no such symptom made its appearance, he began almost to hate the unhappy victim of his scheme. For the time, however, he seemed to love her, and she was more than content. But Minnie, as well as many others in Wilton, was walking on a hidden volcano, which any day might vomit forth its burning streams and engulf her.

#### SAMOA.

THE troubles which bade fair to arise from the "expansion" movements of Britons and Germans in the South Seas, have been happily averted by the arrangement of the Pacific Commission, composed of representatives of both countries, to consider respective rights, and define limits of extension. The deliberations of the Commission have resulted in the adoption of certain recommendations, which, to summarise briefly, provide for the recognition of the equality of rights of the subjects of each power in the territory of the other; agree that no differential duties shall be established in such new settlements as New Guinea; that navigation as well as trading shall be left free to each; and that arms, alcohol, and ammunition shall not be supplied by either to the aborigines.

More important are the recommendations that the Solomon Islands, the New Hebrides, the Friendly Islands, and the Navigator's Islands shall be declared "open" for common action, and that the independence of each shall be respected. The Australians have a very decided desire to "annex" the Solomon Islands, though the desire is probably more the result of fear of occupation by another power, than of any very strong longing for the islands themselves. In truth, they do not seem very attractive in themselves, and in our colonial history they are more associated with tragedy than with material gain. It is probable, therefore, that the colonists will be satisfied with their guaranteed independence, and the same probability exists with



regard to the New Hebrides. With regard to the latter group, there is a distinct "understanding" between Great Britain and France that the neutrality should be maintained. There has been some reason to fear that France would not lose the first opportunity of cancelling the understanding, and there are many reasons why France, of all powers, would be an unwelcome intruder there. However this may be, the Anglo-German agreement seems to offer settlement of the long impending difficulty about Samoa. And it is about Samoa that we now mean to discourse.

Who of European mariners first sighted the group formerly known to geographers as the Navigator's Islands, but now better known as the Samoan Archipelago, and, still better, as simply Samoa, is a disputed point. It is usual, however, to credit their discovery to Roggwein, who afterwards died miserably in prison in Batavia. But it was Bougainville, the Frenchman, who gave the group the name of Navigator's Islands, because he saw so many native canoes plying about the coasts. The impression which he derived is still apt to be formed by a stranger visiting the islands, that the people are a seafaring race; but, as a matter of fact, they are not so. Their canoes are numerous, and of construction as skilful as any to be found in the South Pacific, but they seldom go out of sight of land, and use their vessels for intercommunication only.

The group covers a sea-area of about two hundred miles, and this is, practically, the limits of the navigation of the natives. Within the limits, however, active intercourse has been maintained as long as traditions extend into the dim past, and outside of the limits there has been a frequent, if not a constant, intercourse with the Fijian group, some six hundred miles to the south-west. Like the Fijian, the Samoan Islands lie between the equator and the tropic of Capricorn, and they are second only to Fiji in size and importance among all the archipelagos of Western Polynesia. Generations ago the Samoans had large double canoes, like the Fijians, but in recent times their favourite vessel has been the single canoe, with outrigger—boats which vary in length from fifteen to twenty feet, and in the width from eighteen to twenty inches, the larger sizes carrying from fifteen to twenty persons. The small canoes are hollowed out of logs, but the large ones are carefully

built, the planks being sewn, not nailed together, and cemented with a kind of gum taken from the bread-fruit tree.

As to the origin of the name Samoa, there are several traditions current in the island, which have been carefully collected and recorded by Dr. Turner. One will suffice.

Once upon a time the Rocks married the Earth, and a child was born, which was named Moa, meaning the centre of the earth. Salevao, the god of the rocks, went to get water wherewith to wash the child, and made the water thereafter sacred, or Sa, to Moa. The conjunction gives the native name. After this operation, both Rocks and Earth demanded some of the water to drink, which Salevao agreed to give if they could get a bamboo to convey it by. Hence arose springs and streams. Salevao then turned himself into loose stones, and declared that everything which grew, as well as the rocks and earth, should be sacred to Moa—Sa ia moa, abbreviated to Samoa.

The Samoan traditions as to the origin of matter and man are not less curious. First of all, was Dreai, or nothing. From this sprang, in succession, Nanamu, fragrance; Efuefu, dust; Iloa, perceivable things; Mana, obtainable things; Eleele, earth; Papatu, high rocks; Maataanoa, small stones; Maunga, mountains. A marriage between the high rocks and the earth rocks produced the Earth; one between the Earth and the Winds produced the Clouds; while other successive unions evolved dew, shadow, daylight, twilight, and so forth, until emerged Tangaloa, the creation of man, from whom springs a long genealogy down to one Sanea. This Sanea was the founder of the Malietoa dynasty, the twenty-third generation of which is represented by Malietoa Talavon, the now recognised King of Samoa.

Another tradition places Tangaloa originally in space, where he first made the heavens and then the earth. Once he sent down his daughter to earth in the form of the bird Turi (a kind of snipe), but she could find nothing but ocean; he sent her again, and she found land; he sent her a third time with some earth and a creeping-plant, which at first grew, then its leaves withered, then it swarmed with worms, which gradually became men and women.

From such traditions as these, it is easy to see that the Samoans may have had a distinct religion of their own. Dr. Turner has enabled us to see something of it.

nature of that religion and the character of the numerous deities worshipped or feared; but the subject is too wide to allow of more than passing mention in this paper. The Samoans had both general gods and domestic gods, or titulary deities, and they certainly believed in some kind of future state. They not only made offerings to their gods, but their worship was a severe, even a slavish one, which the cunning of the priests made as extravagant as possible. But their religion or superstition was sufficiently definite to co-operate with the civil power, that of the chiefs and heads of families, in preserving law and order. These laws, of course, were unwritten; but there seems no doubt that they had penal arrangements with regard to theft, murder, adultery, and for offences against communal rights.

Although cannibalism has not been practised by the Samoans within European memory, and never, apparently, from the mere love of human flesh, which was the case with the Fijians, there is no doubt that during their many wars they did occasionally cook and eat the body of an enemy. This, however, seems to have been done not so much to gratify appetite as to show the climax of hatred and revenge. To threaten a Samoan with roasting is to apply to him the foulest insult. On the other hand, the vanquished in a war will testify submission to the victor by bringing wood for fire, stones for ovens, and split bamboos for knives to the victors, which means, "Here, we are your pigs, to be eaten if you please, and here are the knives to cut us up with." To humiliate an enemy or a malefactor, he would sometimes be bound, slung on a pole, and carried to one of the pits, or earth-ovens, where the cooking is done, within which he would be placed for a time, although the fire was not lighted. All this, however, would seem to point to the probability that in the very distant past cannibalism was more frequent in Samoa than it has ever been in recent times.

The men tattooed themselves elaborately, but not the women. The reason of this is thus explained: Taema and Tila (the Goddesses of Tattoo) once swam from Fiji, in order to teach the Samoans the craft, and they were ordered to sing all the way, that they might not forget their mission, "Tattoo the women, but not the men." The way was long and the water cold, so they got "mixed," and arrived in Samoa singing. "Tattoo the men. but not

the women." This little mistake made all the difference in Samoan life, for it became the rule that no young man was considered to have attained his majority, or to be entitled to common rights and privileges, until he had been tattooed. The process was tedious and painful, and although still practised to some extent, is dying away with the introduction of European clothing. The men, indeed, are glad to evade the painful operation, seeing that its results can no longer make them distinguished in the eyes of all observers.

The natives are said to number now about thirty-five thousand, and they are more or less Christianised. The London Missionary Society has been working among them since 1830. Previous to that almost nothing was known of the islands. They were discovered, as has been said, by Roggewein. He was a Dutchman, and was there about 1722. Then Bougainville paid a visit in 1768, and La Perouse in 1787. Captain Cook does not appear to have actually visited the islands, but he heard of them when at the Tonga, or Friendly Islands, about 1773, and about eighteen years later they were visited by Her Majesty's ship Pandora. The missionaries, however, were the first to offer us reliable information about the islands and the people.

There are ten inhabited and a large number of small, uninhabited islands. The largest of the group is Savaii, which is about one hundred and fifty miles in circumference; the next, Upolu, which is one hundred and thirty miles in circumference, and the next, Tutuila, which is eighty miles in circumference. The rest of the ten are small affairs, containing from ten to eighty square miles each. The total area of the group was estimated by Captain Wilkes at about one thousand six hundred and fifty square miles. All the islands are of volcanic origin, and some are surrounded by coral reefs. The mountains rise on Savaii to a height of one thousand five hundred feet; on Upolu, to two thousand, and on Tutuila, to three thousand feet. The islands are well covered with rich tropical vegetation, and present scenery of the most enchanting beauty. The soil is extremely fertile, and the climate is mild and agreeable, although somewhat relaxing. Elephantiasis and leprosy used to be common among the natives, but are said by Dr. Turner to be now greatly abating. On the other hand, pulmonary complaints are increasing among them, owing to the introduction of clothing.

This seems so curious that it needs explanation. Instead of clothing the islanders were accustomed to rub their skins with oil, but now they wear a cotton shirt or a cotton gown. These garments, of course, often get wet, but they are never taken off to dry, and the people sit and sleep in them, no matter how damp they may be. So, in spite of their large limbs, big chests, and naturally splendid physique, and in spite of the lovely climate, consumption and pulmonary complaints of all kinds are very prevalent.

It has been usual to call the Samoans an indolent race; but they are, at least, more active than the Fijians and than South Sea Islanders generally. A friend of the present writer, who has been long resident in Samoa, assures him that it is a mistake to call any of the Polynesians lazy, merely because they do not care to work hard for the whites. Imagine, for instance, the case of the Samoan. For five months of the year he has as much bread-fruit as he cares for, while all the year round he has bananas, which, like the bread-fruit, grow on for ever without cultivation. Besides these he can, with very little trouble, grow tares and other roots for variety, while others only have to be gathered. He has also cocoa-nuts all the year round, and other fruits in their season; his wife and children can catch in an hour or two a boatload of fish. Naturally he has no care for the future, and therefore no inducement to work. His wants are few, and they are supplied almost without labour.

The Samoan houses of to-day are the same as have been in use for ages. In construction they resemble a beehive in shape, are raised from the ground by posts at intervals of four feet, and they will measure, perhaps, thirty-five feet in diameter and one hundred feet in circumference. The spaces between the posts answer the purposes of doors and windows, and are closed at night with cocoa-leaf mats or blinds, but through the day are all left open to the free play of air and light. The floor is composed of several inches of rough stones, upon which is placed a layer of smooth pebbles, carpeted with—first, a layer of cocoa-leaf mats, and then a layer of the fine mats which are the pride and wealth of the people. Some of the native mats are almost priceless in value; that is to say, nothing will induce the owners to part with them if they have been in the family for generations. The roof of the house is supported by two or

three posts, twenty feet long, and sunk deep into the earth. The rafters form a species of cage-work of bread-fruit wood, very neat and ingenious. Outside, the roof is carefully thatched with sugar-cane leaves, strung on to long reeds, which hang over the leaves. This, also, is very pretty and ingenious, but the disadvantage is that the leaves stand straight up during a gale of wind. The object of the circular roof is that it can be removed bodily, and transported by canoe, when the family wishes to "flit." The house contains only one apartment, but at night the inmates are separated by the erection of low tents of native cloth, strung up to the roof. For beds, four or five mats are piled together, and for pillows, a piece of thick bamboo, raised upon short feet, about three inches from the floor. A mat, or a sheet of native cloth, forms the covering of the sleeper. The fireplace is in the centre, but it is not used for cooking—merely for lighting up the place at night. The cooking is all done upon stones in the earth-ovens before-mentioned. The whole establishment is put together on co-operative principles—one friend giving his labour, another wood, another mats, another cloth, and so on. Generally, however, a professional builder is employed to put things together. He has no specific charge, but relies upon the generosity of the family and their friends.

There is not much private property among the Samoans, who cling with tenacity to their old system of common interest in everything—everything, at any rate, which requires co-operative effort or labour to produce or obtain, is common property. This system has some advantages, but it has also great disadvantages, the most serious of which is the clog which it forms to individual progress. At the same time it annihilates poverty. There is always shelter and food for the aged, the sick, and the infirm. "A stranger," said Dr. Turner, "may at first sight think a Samoan one of the poorest of the poor, and yet he may live ten years with the Samoan and not be able to make him understand what poverty really is in the European sense of the word. 'How is it?' he will always say. 'No food? Has he no friends? No house to live in? Where did he grow? Are there no houses belonging to his friends? Have the people there no love for each other?'"

Civilisation has not, in the opinion of the writer's friend, improved the moral

condition of the Samoans. They are a race of communists, and are constantly holding public meetings, at which presents are exchanged and kindnesses reciprocated. They are naturally a hospitable people, and are always willing to share what they have with a stranger. But they are gradually learning the value of trade, which means to them "nothing for nothing," where foreigners are concerned. Their natural bent towards lying and trickery has not been eradicated by Christianity, and even the most ostentatiously Christianised of them will exhibit no shame when found out. It is probable that, like most primitive races, they will die away before the advance of the foreigner.

For some twenty years previous to 1881 the islands were in a constant state of civil war, the object of rival factions being to obtain possession of Apia, which was always looked upon as the seat of government. These wars were not very deadly, and meant usually the marching about of large bodies of men and women, who ravaged the cocoanut and bread-fruit groves of their opponents. In 1881, however, the whites interfered, as damage was being inflicted on lands which they had lawfully acquired from the natives. Then Malieto was declared king for seven years, with Tomaseu, the chief of the opposite party, as vice-king. Peace has since prevailed, and the interests of foreigners conserved by a municipal board, composed of the British, American, and German consuls, and representative settlers of each nationality. Under this system law and order have been preserved, and the security to life and property has been almost complete.

In 1878 and 1879, the several Governments of the United States, Germany, and Great Britain concluded treaties with the Government of Samoa, which, among other things, decree that Samoa shall give to no other power rights in excess of those granted to the several contracting parties. Thus additional privileges granted to any one of the treaty powers would be a breach of treaty in respect of the other two.

For some fifty years or more, prior to 1872, the trade of the islands was almost entirely in the hands of the firm of Godeffroy and Company, of Hamburg. This great firm was almost a political organisation, and ruled things in the South Pacific much as the East India Company used to do in India. They had resident agents and stores on every island where trade was

to be done; they concluded treaties with the chiefs; they kept a fleet of vessels constantly coming and going; they acquired land by all sorts of methods, and they had plantations and factories of all kinds. After the Franco-German war, this firm collapsed, and a company was formed to carry out the Samoan branch of their business. But other foreigners had gradually settled in the islands, and the Germans are no longer in a majority there. Of a total of about two hundred and fifty white residents, fully one hundred are British, seventy-five Germans, thirty Americans, twenty Scandinavians, and twenty-five are of various nationalities. The total acreage of the group is about eight hundred thousand acres, of which two hundred and forty thousand acres belong now to Britons, two hundred and ten thousand to Americans, and only eighty thousand to Germans.

The trade of the islands is no longer monopolised by Hamburg. Of a total import value of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds, fifty thousand pounds comes from Sydney, forty thousand pounds from San Francisco, twenty thousand pounds from Auckland, and not ten thousand pounds from Hamburg. The exports are of the value of about seventy thousand pounds annually, and consist of about four thousand tons of coprah, and two thousand bales of cotton.

Coprah is the dried kernel of the cocoanut, and is shipped to Sydney and London for the manufacture of cocoanut-oil. The imports are materials for clothing, timber, tinned meats and preserved provisions generally, petroleum-oil, hardware, flour, biscuits, and lager-beer. Of this last item it is said that the foreigners in Samoa consume more per head than any other community; but it is certainly infinitely preferable to the "square gin" which used to be a favourite poison of the whites in Polynesia.

The greater portion of the foreigners reside in Apia, where are also the consular offices. Apia is on the island of Upolu, and at the head of a bay which for beauty is said to exceed anything known to travellers, and to throw into second places even such exquisite scenes as the Bay of Naples and the Bay of Sydney.

Although, as we have said, cotton and coprah form at present almost the entire exports, the islands are, beyond doubt, capable of producing a variety of other produce. The experiments instituted by Godeffroy and Company proved that both

soil and climate are admirably adapted to the cultivation of wheat, coffee, tobacco, sugar-cane, rice, jute, chinchona, etc. The great difficulty is that which hampers Fiji—labour. The Samoans will not work, and the British Government will not allow their subjects to import labour, at least in the present uncertain political condition. The Germans have been accustomed to import Polynesians from the Kingsmill Islands, and even from New Britain, but the supply has been decreasing, and last year was only about one half of what it was three or four years ago.

With regard to annexation, which assumed such prominence by the recent action of the New Zealand Government in telegraphing home for authority to appropriate the group, our latest intelligence is to the effect that the natives are not particularly anxious to be annexed by any nation, but they dread and dislike the German officials. It was in fear of them that King Malietoa petitioned New Zealand to come and take possession. It is not generally known that in 1883 the King sent a letter to our Queen, which is rather a curiosity in its way. It ran as follows:

"TO HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY,  
VICTORIA QUEEN OF GREAT BRITAIN  
AND IRELAND.

"Capital of Samoa, Mulinuu,  
November 19, 1883.

"YOUR MAJESTY,—I write this letter to your Majesty, the Queen of Great Britain, because I wish to bring my petition to your notice. I know well that you have a regard for me, because you are in the habit of sending visitors to me—great chiefs of your Government—year after year, and they always tell me of the good wishes of your Majesty. Your Majesty, I write this letter, being certain of your regard for me and love of right, and because I have seen and heard that the other nations, both white and black, which are under your Majesty's Government, have happiness in this world, and have no more trouble nor fear, but have peace in their lives. Therefore I wish to be under your arm. I wish to tell you my mind, to be under the flag of your Government. I, and three quarters of the chiefs and people of Samoa, wish to see put up the flag of Great Britain at once. I should be very glad and thankful to your Majesty if you would send one or two chiefs of your Government that we can talk face to face, and that we can tell them our wishes for the British flag to be set up in our

kingdom the same as you have done in Fiji. Your Majesty, I hope that I shall have an answer according to my wish. I hope God will take care of you and your people.—I am,

(Signed) "MALIETOA, KING OF SAMOA."

Whether this actually represented the views of all the chiefs at the time one can hardly say, but at any rate it resulted in no reply. The next year, however, fear of the Germans produced united action, which resulted in the dispatch of the following petition:

"TO HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA,  
QUEEN OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

"YOUR MAJESTY,—We are the kings and chiefs of Samoa who write to your Majesty, to pray and entreat you to receive our request. It is now nearly a year ago since our King wrote to give over to your Majesty the sovereignty of Samoa. We have been very anxiously waiting for an answer, but no answer has been received. Your Majesty, great is our regard for your government. We know well our people will be protected, and we shall have peace under your rule. Therefore we entreat your Majesty that our anxiety may be relieved, which arises from our earnest desire that Samoa may be given over to your government. It is entirely at the disposal of your Majesty as to whether it is better for us to become an English colony, or be connected with the Government of New Zealand. Your Majesty, our hearts are grieved, and our fear is very great indeed with regard to other Governments who desire to take possession of our country, which is not according to our wish. We therefore hope your Majesty will speedily come to our assistance and save us, in accordance with the sentiments in our request. We wish to make it clearly understood to your Majesty, we, the kings and chiefs of Samoa, that we give over our country to the rule of the Government of Great Britain, and we rely on the Government of your Majesty to protect our people. We hope and pray to God that your Majesty and your Government may prosper.

"(Signed) MALIETOA (king), TAPUA (vice-king), and fifty-two chiefs."

The Germans, it seems, were very angry with Malietoa for throwing himself into the arms of England, and some of them have been trying to stir up the rival chiefs to dethrone him. Thereupon resulted a third

petition to the Queen, and also a despatch to the Government of New Zealand. After this arrangements were made between Lord Granville and Prince Bismarck for a joint commission to consider this and other matters connected with the progress of each nation in the Pacific. The result of that commission we mentioned at the outset.

The foreigners generally, excepting the Germans, are rather inclined to allow things to remain as they are, if the status quo be sufficiently guaranteed. But if that cannot be, even the Americans would prefer to see the British flag hoisted rather than the German, because they know it would ensure for them the greater measure of freedom. And not all the residents of German birth are wishful for German annexation, because many of them have evaded the military laws, and have no liking for the idea of being placed under them again.

Thus matters remain at present on one of the fairest and most fertile spots on the face of the earth.

### THE AUXILIARY NAVY.

A GENERAL feeling exists that all is not as it should be as regards our ascendancy upon the seas, and without going into the vexed question of the value in fighting power of our existing navy, it is evident to the most untechnical observer that the inventions of modern science have so far revolutionised the art of naval warfare that we can no longer rely solely upon a powerful fleet to preserve our shores from attack. We may fairly trust that, with all its defects—and many of the great sea-monsters on whose prowess we should have to rely in the event of a naval war are admittedly of an obsolete type—the British fleet would be a match for any that could be brought against it. But a prudent enemy would no doubt decline any challenge to come out in force and be smashed, and would probably rely on flying squadrons and swift detached cruisers to destroy our commerce and ruin our commercial ports, while trusting to mines and torpedoes to keep our heavily-armed ships at a distance. And it may be doubted whether it would now be possible for our fleet to maintain a rigorous blockade of the coasts of a powerful and determined enemy, which would bristle with torpedoes and submarine mines, while adventurous

craft would sally out in the dead of night, armed with the latest engines of destruction.

And if we fail in effectually blockading an enemy's ports, what protection have we against his attacks? What security have we against a sudden descent, or an attack upon our commercial ports that would paralyse our commerce; the effects of which might drive the trade of the world from our shores; which might bring home to our own doors some of the horrors of war from which our land has so long been exceptionally preserved?

As far as our present preparations go, it would be difficult to answer the question satisfactorily. Our great rivers and great ports are in the state of defence that might be expected after years of unbroken peace, and even the Thames, which is the best defended among them, and has forts which, properly armed, might be really formidable—even the Thames is not absolutely inaccessible to a resolute foe bent on destroying England's one arsenal and crippling all her strength at a blow. But what of the Mersey, with the untold wealth that lines its wharves? What of the Humber and the Trent, with their thriving commerce and their open shores, which seem almost to invite the incursions of a northern foe? What of the noble estuary where Bristol's warehouses are crammed with sugar and tobacco? And again, what of the rich and luxurious pleasure-cities on the coast, with their villas and public buildings, whose long rows of brilliant lights sparkling at night in the dark waves of the Channel, seem to form almost a continuous line from the North Foreland to Land's End, while they are sprinkled in brilliant patches all along our eastern and western coasts?

We must not fondly hug ourselves in the belief that we can appeal to the laws of nations to protect our undefended cities from attack. Whatever can damage an enemy and cripple his resources will always be deemed allowable by a hostile force. We ourselves have never been over particular in such matters. Whatever you can see and reach, bombard, was the good old rule and simple plan of our naval commanders in former wars, and we can expect no better treatment than we have given to others. There is no resort against the law of the strongest, when once the arbitrament of war is appealed to, and the utmost exhibition of lamb-like submission will always leave a pretext for the destroyer.

And yet the same change in the conditions of naval warfare which creates all this uncertainty as to the value of our armaments, has furnished us the means, if we choose to use them, of putting our coasts all round in a state of security, and that not by an expenditure of millions on cumbrous forts and iron-clad monsters, but by utilising the resources that lie ready to our hands.

We have the finest seafaring population in the world—fishermen, boatmen, and coasting sailors, apart from the class which sails on foreign voyages, men who mostly marry early and are averse from any engagements which carry them to distant parts and for indefinite periods, but who have abundance of courage and patriotism nevertheless. The records of our life-boat service testify to the former, while a certain intolerance of strangers and foreigners is, if not commendable in itself, nevertheless a good backbone for the latter.

Now this seafaring population is in a great measure excluded, from no fault of its own, but by force of circumstances, from any share in the defence of the country. For as a rule it is not from these classes that the navy is principally recruited. The great bulk of the boys who are trained into seamen come from London and our commercial cities. It is not the fisher-boy, but the errand-boy, to whom we must look as the embryo man-o'-war's-man. Smart lads—and they must be unexceptionable in physique and character—are continually being trained into smart seamen, and the result is a sailor who combines some of the best traditions of the British Tar with a disciplined intelligence and quickness quite remarkable. Happily the supply of the British boy is perennial and inexhaustible; so that, as far as the ordinary requirements of the service are concerned, any difficulty in manning the navy is a thing of the past. Then for emergencies we have the naval reserve, with a nominal complement of twenty thousand men, but rarely up to its full strength.

But for reasons shown above, the coast population does not care to join the reserve—which implies foreign service in time of war—even where eligible. But it is almost certain that if the opportunity were afforded them of volunteering for service in gun-boats and torpedo-boats attached to their own ports and of cruising about their own coasts, they would gladly join the movement. Then there are numbers of young

fellows who take kindly to a half-aquatic existence, and who, in every possible interval of business or pleasure, are found in canoes or two-ton yachts, cruising, fishing, fowling, with a veritable enthusiasm for the sea which is almost peculiar to our island breed—and these might be looked to to furnish grit and enthusiasm to the rest. For instructors and commanders there is no lack of half-pay naval officers who would be only too glad of the chance of employment and distinction. Our rivers, again, would furnish an admirable class of men—boatmen, bargemen, and the like—admirable, that is, from a combative point of view, where amenity of manners is not a vital consideration—men accustomed to boats and often half-seafaring in character.

With all these we have the materials of a force—Naval Volunteers, Sea Fencibles, Royal Coast Brigade, a body of men who would soon compare in numbers and efficiency with their brethren of the land forces. Some difference will be necessary in the constitution of the naval force. The men who gain their living from sea or river must be paid for the time occupied in drill and training—rewards for efficiency must liberally be given—and the service dignified with ungrudging official recognition, while the administration, instead of being entirely centred in Whitehall, should be localised as far as possible.

But what is most wanted at the present moment is an Acting Committee composed of the best informed and most influential of the promoters of the movement, to visit the coast from John o' Groat's to Land's End, to put themselves en rapport with the leading citizens of the great commercial towns, to ascertain the wants of each district, and to estimate its resources in the way of voluntary force. Also it would be the duty of the Committee to obtain a guarantee from the Government of substantial assistance in the shape of gun-boats and their armament, and at the same time to obtain the assistance of the great ship-building firms, and ascertain their capabilities of supplying vessels of the class needed. In this way our coast towns and seaports would be brought into connection with each other and the general Committee, and would know the amount of assistance they are able to exact from the Government and what they must supply from their own resources.

It is satisfactory to find that this important matter has been generally taken

up by public opinion. Already a force of the kind indicated is proposed for the defence of the Thames; and at an influential meeting at Willis's Rooms it was proposed to raise a considerable fund to assist in the establishment of a general naval defensive force. Here is a fair field for local patriotism, and we may hope to see, ere long, men of wealth and position vying with each other in providing the necessary armament for their district corps. If it were a question of providing heavy ironclad ships and their crews, it would be generally felt that this was beyond the scope of local effort. But the general opinion is that a swarm of midge-like craft, each with its sting in the shape of heavy gun or spar torpedo, would be a fair match for an ironclad squadron, while they would render the coast absolutely inaccessible to transports containing troops, or to any unarmoured cruiser.

All this has been condemned in advance by some critics as parochial warfare and a vestry navy, and if there were any danger of interfering with the scope of the Royal Navy or intercepting the sources of its supply of men, there would be some ground for the objection. But in every respect the new force will be an auxiliary one, essentially for coast and harbour defence, leaving the regular forces free to deal with navies in line of battle and undertake all offensive operations. There is no danger of civil war, we may assure such unfriendly critics. Yarmouth will not fall foul of the Cinque Ports, and the only rivalry between eastern and western men will be in point of general efficiency. All that is required from the Government is its countenance to the plan and a certain amount of assistance in money and war material. If it be urged that there is no public money available—well, we have heard of loans being raised for less laudable objects, and while in a general way the result of our heavy expenditure on warlike preparations has not always appeared commensurate with the cost, the small amount expended on the volunteer service has borne fruit, like the dragon's teeth of the classic legend, in thousands of armed men.

The same result will, no doubt, attend this latest movement to provide for our national defence, if it be not crippled by the discouragement of the organs of public opinion: a happy result that, once attained, may put an end to the periodic scares and panics that are so undignified in a strong and wealthy nation, and so pernicious in their consequences to our national welfare. Anyhow, we shall have done our

best, and if misfortune comes upon us we can take it fighting, like the Yankee preacher.

If the great commercial ports take up the matter with anything like the spirit with which we credit them, the success of the movement is assured. Liverpool alone could furnish forth a formidable volunteer gunboat squadron, and Manchester, which also hopes to be a port before long, should compete in friendly rivalry in the task of rendering impregnable the great estuary of the Mersey. The Welshmen might be trusted to defend their own coasts and harbours, and the men of the western coasts would show themselves worthy descendants of the countrymen of Hawkins and Drake, and, like them, be ready to meet the strongest armadas that may come against them. The old flag of the Cinque Ports may once more be seen upon the seas, and the creeks and inlets of Essex may have their little hornet fleet ready to sally out. The Thames, with the wealth of London on its shores, should furnish forth a goodly show, and the bold seamen of East Anglia would not be far behind. The Humber, with the rich Yorkshire towns that lie behind it, should supply a fair contingent; Tees and Tyne, with their wealth of coal and iron, would not be found wanting either. Then there are the hardy seamen of the Scottish coasts, the men of Ultima Thule, and the fishermen of the Isles—all these are to be counted upon to swell the ranks of the volunteer navy.

At the same time—while the chief reliance of our defensive force would be upon gunboat and torpedo work, and each port should have at least two small, well-armoured gunboats, carrying one or more heavy guns, so as to go out and meet an enemy's ship at sea, as well as torpedo craft to deal with any ironclad threatening an attack—land batteries should not be neglected, to support the boats with their fire, and to protect them if forced to retire to refit or repair damages. There would be no danger then of losing touch of our enemy, we should feel him all along the coast, and let us hope that he would feel us too, every creek and bay letting loose its gruffly-barking hounds to join the chase.

And let no one talk of the decadence of England if this movement of national defence be carried through, but rather of her renewal and revival, that she has come back to her old strength, and once more found the talisman of national greatness.



There is time for it all, if we make haste, but there is no time to be lost. There is a lull for a time, the clouds have opened and the storm seems to have passed over, but that is all the more reason why we should all strive to make the old ship right and tight and seaworthy. When the storm is once upon us we shall have to make the best of her as she is, with all her defects, and sink or swim accordingly.

#### PASSION-FLOWERS.

SHE takes them from the warm south side  
Of her fair house at eventide;  
Her fragile fingers blend  
The flowers for graveyard wreath and cross,  
Symbolic of a love and loss  
Whereof she knows no end.

Far, far behind her in the haze  
Of years and tears, those early days  
Of love and sorrow lie.  
She was a wife; on one true breast,  
Her troubled girlhood found a rest  
In glad security.

Together in youth's morning-time,  
Their hearts rang true to true love's chime,  
Through never-weary hours;  
Together, standing in the sun,  
They pulled with gladness, one by one,  
Love's purple passion-flowers.

But death stole grimly to their side,  
And reft the bridegroom from the bride.  
Her marriage coronet  
Was scarcely laid with blushes down,  
Ere on her curls of chestnut-brown,  
The widow's cap was set.

She was a wife, true wife to one  
Whose noble race was swiftly run;  
And, faithful to love's creed,  
She, made a widow in her youth,  
Hath kept her first, her fairest truth,  
And widowed is indeed.

He left her lonely, when the springs  
Of life were fullest, when love clings  
With passion to its mate.  
She dropped the purple flowers of love  
Among the grass that waved above  
His grave—and learned to wait.

She gave him all she had in life,  
Her fair, fond self, a perfect wife,  
With dower of hope and youth;  
She gives him all she has in death,  
Her chaste, white life, untouched by breath  
Or hint against her truth.

She waits. No longest year shall bring  
To her a second spousal ring,  
No other marriage hours;  
She waits, until by Eden's tide,  
The bridegroom gathers for his bride,  
The fadeless passion-flowers!

#### TUNNELLING THE ALPS.

FORTY years ago, there was not much talk about tunnels, except about that strange nonsuch which Brunel had made under the Thames. The railway over the Semmering, opened in 1854, was astonishing everyone with its high

gradients; but that a railway should be taken, at a comparatively low level, right through the heart of the mountain, was what very few as yet dreamed of. People went by the old passes—twenty thousand a year over the Great St. Bernard, the historic route which Hannibal may have crossed, and which Charlemagne went over in 773, and Barbarossa in 1106, and which, therefore, despite the cold—it freezes up there at midsummer—Napoleon chose in 1800 when he went across to fight the battle of Marengo. The St. Bernard needs its monastery, for, in the pass, the average winter fall of snow is twelve yards. The St. Gothard, more than a thousand feet lower, is a very popular road. It has an hotel as well as a monastery, and the diligence used to take twelve hours in crossing it. Seventy thousand was the yearly number of travellers, after the mere mule-track with which people had been content till 1820 was replaced by a good road, built at the cost of the two cantons of Uri and Ticino. It is worth while to take a good map, and look at the other passes along the whole semicircle of mountain. Two of them date as roads from Napoleon's time—the Mont Cenis, which took seven and a half million francs to alter from a mule-track to a proper road, with twenty-three houses of shelter along it; and the Simplon, which cost eighteen millions (Italian money—sere italo, says the inscription in a gallery at the summit), and took five thousand workmen five summers to construct. The Simplon, in its old form, is said to have been one of the Roman passes; the Splügen was the regular mediæval pass between Germany and Italy. Henry the Fourth, for instance, went by it to Canossa, to grovel at the feet of Pope Gregory the Seventh. Macdonald, the French general, took the same road in the winter of 1800, losing whole files of his men by the avalanches.\*

The Stelvio—Stilfzer Joch, the Germans call it—is the highest of all the passes, nearly three thousand feet higher than the St. Gothard, and was not completed till 1824, at a cost of seven and a half millions of francs. Despite all the

\* He was much more unfortunate than Lecourie, who, the winter before, took his army over the Bernardino by what was then nothing better than a mule-track. But, then, Macdonald had no storms, and the old trackway led through the frightful gorge of the Cardinal, just the place for an avalanche to do its worst in. The new road prudently avoids this.

galleries and shelter-houses, it is a very dangerous winter road. The Brenner, from Innsbruck to Verona, is the lowest of the chief Alpine passes. The road was made by the Austrian Government as long ago as 1772, along the line marked out by the Roman beacon-towers, for this was the regular way from Italy to Rhaetia. It is, in point of scenery, the ugliest of all Alpine roads until you get down to Maria Theresa's triumphal arch and the suburbs of Innsbruck. Its railway was opened in 1867, and is a marvel of engineering skill, with its twenty-two tunnels—the longest nearly one thousand yards—and sixty viaducts. Some of the curves are very sharp; several of the tunnels are curved, and the steepest gradients are twenty-five per thousand. The Semmering Railway dates thirteen years before the Brenner, and is part of the line from Vienna to Trieste. Here the gradients are still steeper, the maximum being thirty per thousand, and the longest tunnel is more than one thousand five hundred yards. It is one of the grandest lines in existence, leaping from point to point just where the precipices are wildest. The trains take four times as long as they do on the level; but, except in the tunnels, one always wishes they would take longer, so that one might have more time to admire the magnificent scenery.

Of course, when you have made a short tunnel, a long one is only a question of time and expense. The idea of boring Mont Cenis was started as long ago as 1841 by the Savoyard, Médail. He surveyed the ground, and showed that by the Frejus Pass the distance would be nine miles, and the work would take thirty-six years with the unimproved hand-borer of the time. Charles Albert was very anxious to get a road which should throw Savoy and Piedmont together, but his defeat at Novara, in 1848, put a stop to the project. Meanwhile, tunnels had been growing. In 1854, the date of the Semmering, the tunnel of Giovi, nearly three thousand five hundred yards, on the Genoa and Turin line, was engineered by Maus, a Belgian, who also had his plan for Mont Cenis. But the work did not begin till 1857, after the Sardinian engineer, Sommeiller, had invented his hydraulic borer, and our countryman, Bartlett, had shown how steam could be successfully applied to the same purpose. Modane is at the northern, Bardonnèche at the southern end of the tunnel. Victor Emmanuel and Cavour aided, by electricity, the first mine at the

former place, and the slow process of hand-boring—less than a yard a day—began. The Italian war put a stop even to this slow rate of progress; and not till 1861, at Bardonnèche, and two years later, at Modane, were the boring-machines set up. At first the rate was still slower than with the hand-borers; the men did not understand the machines, which, moreover, were not properly fixed. At last they got up a speed of nearly four yards a day, when "the stuff didn't turn agin them," as the Cornish miners say; but, on the Modane side, where there was a great deal of very hard quartzite, the rate was seldom much more than half that. Hence the meeting-place was not in the middle, but considerably nearer Modane. Both parties, however, kept pretty exactly on the same line, which to an outsider seems very difficult; when they met they were just a little more than a foot wrong. The work was very trying in that damp heat in which it is death to the white man to do anything that needs hard, steady labour. Sommeiller, the engineer, saw the tunnel complete (in December, 1870), but he did not live to see it used for trains; the railway was not opened till September, 1871, and he died in the July of the same year. This tunnel cost thirty-six million francs, and was finished nine years sooner than was expected. Indeed, so little was done till 1862, that we may say it took less than eleven years making. Of course, having got Savoy, France became largely interested in the railway. She paid half the cost, and gave Italy a large bonus for every year gained on the estimated twenty-five. The tunnel has a steep rise of twenty-two per thousand to the middle, after which it slopes very gently towards Italy. Properly speaking, it ought to be called the Frejus Tunnel. The real Mont Cenis is nearly twenty miles to the north-east, and over it runs the wonderful railway, in which the carriages hang like a cradle on a Himalayan rope-bridge, built by our countrymen—engineer Fell, and contractor Brassey. Of this marvellous work the little Righi Railway, which almost every Swiss tourist goes up, is a toy model. It needs some nerve to take the trip. Two parallel wires supported at intervals upon iron poles, with a basket on wheels hanging between them, does not impress the looker-on with a sense of security. You think what would happen if a wire broke, or a wheel got "off the rails" in going over some valley with an Alpine torrent rushing down it; and you

wonder when the ropes were last tested, and whether the company would pay damages in case of an upset. But what is the Righi rail, which is over almost before you have got used to it, compared to Fell's line over the Cenis? One cannot help feeling sorry that it does not work now; they tried it for a time against the tunnel, but even tourists so generally preferred the quicker route that the open-air line did not pay. It will, however, be the parent of many an Alpine line, for the cost of tunnelling is so tremendous, that we have probably seen the last of it, so far as the Alps are concerned. The St. Gothard tunnel cost the enormous sum of over sixty millions of francs. Even the Arlberg tunnel cost forty millions; and people who think nothing of eleven millions sterling for killing many Arabs and losing many precious English lives in the Soudan, cry out as if the world was coming to an end at the proposal to spend a modest two millions sterling (i.e., fifty millions of francs) on anything like a tunnel or a canal.

A tunnel from Switzerland to Italy had been talked of since 1848—these ideas always crop out in revolutionary times—but the difficulty was which Alp to choose. Switzerland was much too poor to do the work alone; and France, Germany, and Austria each wished, of course, for the road nearest them. The unification of Italy, in 1860, threw Austria out of the running; but France and the French-speaking cantons, with Geneva at their head, went in strongly for the Simplon, or, rather, the Monte Leone, which would have been a third longer than the St. Gothard; but which, as its elbow-shape gives the chance of a good ventilating-shaft, would probably not have been so fatal to the workmen employed.

The death-rate amongst the St. Gothard workers was very high. The German is an idle fellow at bottom—see how they have been lately forced to get Italians to do road-making in the Rhineland; the native preferring to smoke his pipe and look on, to "working at starvation wages," as he called them. The German-Swiss is a German exaggerated, and thinks that his life is far too valuable to be risked in a stifling tunnel where dynamite is freely going about. Both of them prefer emigrating, and getting a good location among their compatriots in America. So the greater part of the St. Gothard was wrought by Italians, of whom the total number killed and disabled will never be known.

A hundred and fifty were killed and four hundred wounded by the earth caving in, the water bursting out, the blasting going wrong. Of diseases, anemia was the most fatal; but gastric-fever, loss of appetite, palpitation, all did their work. Altogether the loss was quite equal to that of a fair-sized battle—the General, M. Favre of Geneva, friend and adviser of M. de Lesseps in regard to the Panama Canal, dying on the battle-field more than two years before the victory was won. This is a heavy "butcher's bill"; but then the world has a splendid and useful work to show for it.

Of course it was the Franco-Prussian War, and the consequent formation of the German Empire, which gave the St. Gothard the pull over any rival plan. It was talked of in 1866, after Sadowa; and again, three years after, Bismarck had a conference about it at Varzin. France grumbled and talked of making the thing a *casus belli*; but the campaign was soon opened which was decided at Sedan, and France fell very far into the background. The tunnel was begun in October, 1872, at Goschenen on the Swiss, and Airolo on the Italian side. Thanks to improved machinery, the Mont Cenis rate of work was more than doubled, the whole thing taking not much over seven years; but for nearly a year after its completion there were such constant cavings in and outbursts of subterranean rivers that no use could be made of it. Then for six months longer it was used only irregularly, and chiefly for goods trains. The borers were worked by air compressed by hydraulic power, the Reuss at Goschenen and the Ticino at Airolo providing this in abundance. Some of the rock was so hard that ordinary steel was of very little use; and the temperature was considerably higher than that of Mont Cenis. The loss of M. Favre, who died at the works in July, 1879, was due to the heat, so much more unbearable because of the dampness.

But after all, what are these losses compared with the slaughter above ground on the St. Gothard in the autumn and winter of 1799, when it was Austrians against French, and French against Russians, and (as the Highlander says) "Diel tak him that has the shortest claws!" First, Lecourbe and Loison drove the Austrians up the Reuss as far as their entrenchments at the Devil's Bridge, which they "rushed," but not till their enemies had time to put a few kegs of powder

under the arch. It was blown up while the fighting was going on over the key-stone, and hundreds of mutilated corpses were flung into the abyss. The French sent a party round the head of the pass, took the Austrians in rear, and cleared them out of the Reuss Valley; but five weeks later Suvaroff came down with his Russians. At the summit of the St. Gothard Pass the French riflemen had got such good positions, that they stopped Suvaroff's grenadiers. "Dig me a grave," cried the indignant old general, "here at the head of the column." When it was done, he lay down in it, saying: "My children, I don't stir from this spot till you have beaten those fellows out. If you fail, this will be Suvaroff's burying-place." The grenadiers, thus shamed, went at it again and again, and at last swept the French before them. They say (but Jomini says it is a myth) that the Russians patched up the Devil's Bridge with wooden beams, tied together with officers' scarves. Anyhow, they drove the French out just as these had driven out the Austrians; and serve them right, for while they held the pass they had completely gutted the hospice, using every particle of its timber for fuel, and thereby causing misery to any poor creatures who might attempt anything but a summer crossing till the hospitable building set up in the thirteenth century by the Abbot of Disentis, and enlarged in the seventeenth by St. Carlo Borromeo, should be restored.

But I am forgetting the tunnel, as one may well do where the aboveground is so interesting as it is at the St. Gothard. Of the cost, nearly half was borne by Italy, Germany and Switzerland contributing about a quarter each; but the tunnel itself cost somewhat less than a quarter of the whole work. There are, between Immensee, on the lake of Zug, and Goschenen, thirty-one galleries and small tunnels, and twenty-nine between Airolo and Chiasso, and of these the total is double the length of the grand tunnel. Many of these little tunnels are curved, some of them are looped, to avoid impossible differences of level, and, as the gradient is often very steep—though the grand tunnel itself is nearly level—very powerful locomotives are needed to keep a grip on the rails. Through the tunnel the time is twenty-five minutes; and the Reuss Valley, along the shores of the Lucerne and Zug lakes, and then upwards from Luellen, is equalled in grandeur and surpassed in beauty by the scenery on the Italian side down to Bellinzona and the

borders of Lakes Maggiore and Lugano. No wonder it is the favourite route for those who want to see as much as they can of Europe before starting for the East from Brindisi.

But it was not for the sake of passengers that the three nations spent between them, on the railway and its approaches, nearly ten millions sterling. The whole goods traffic, not from Germany and Switzerland only, but from northern France, as far west as Paris, takes this route. Frenchmen are good patriots; but he must be better than good who will pay a shilling a ton for having his wares taken through the Swiss-French tunnel when he can get them carried for ninepence along the Swiss-German line. Paris suffers, for Germany can undersell her more than ever, and can swamp the Italian markets with the 'bimiloterie'—the more costly kinds of which are "articles de Paris"—now made at Nuremberg and other places in the Fatherland. Marseilles suffers still more, and has been petitioning the French Chamber of Commerce on the subject of cheaper through rates for goods along the French lines. Even her corn trade is seriously menaced, for a great deal of the corn destined for Italy and south and west Germany passed through her, but can now be got cheaper through Antwerp or Hamburg, or even through Genoa and Trieste. We, too, suffer. The through rates for coal along the St. Gothard line have been reduced with the view of driving us out of the North Italian market. Already tourists are crying out against the great dépôts of German coal at Locarno and Luino, on the Lago Maggiore, while a line of Italo-German steamers is to run from Genoa to Barcelona and to Spain in general, so as still more completely to put Marseilles "out of it." The three countries admirably supply each other's wants. Germany sends all kinds of manufactures, from beer to locomotives, and plenty of raw produce as well. Switzerland exports any quantity of cotton, silk, and linen goods, besides dresses and condensed milk, and firewood as well, and wood-carvings. Italy has to offer wine, fruits, eggs, fat cattle, rice, jewellery, and objects of vertu. Between them they are pretty well independent of the rest of the world, and as their rates are low, they are getting a good hold on the world's carrying trade as well. Thus foreign wool for the Saxon towns, instead of being unshipped at Marseilles, and then sent across the frontier, is now

taken to Genoa, and goes north by the St. Gothard.

Austro-Hungary, however, is determined not to suffer any longer from the Swiss-German-Italian monopoly. She has set up a way of her own, and has thereby brought France also into direct communication with the East. Early in 1880 she signed a convention with France and Switzerland about a tunnel through the Arlberg to join Innsbruck and Bludenz. The Arlberg chain separates the Rhine and Danube valleys, and the new line joins the Swiss railways at Bludenz. It has its apparatus of little tunnels, galleries to guard against avalanches, etc., the main tunnel being some twelve thousand yards long. It was opened in June, 1884, three years and a half after the machines had begun to work, experience having taught that the boring is much quicker done by beginning at the bottom instead of the top. The rock, too, was mica-schist throughout, instead of being in great part gneiss as in the St. Gothard. On the Tyrolese side it was worked with the percussion borer of Ferroux and Cecconi; on the Swiss side with one invented by Brandt. Ferroux had taken the lead at St. Gothard after Favre died. His is an air-engine, the air being compressed by water-power. Brandt's borer acts by hydraulic pressure alone, and was found to be the more serviceable of the two, its work amounting to one thousand five hundred horse-power, against from eight to nine hundred from the air engine. Three years to the day were spent in piercing the mountain, and the trains were running through within six months after. The cost was forty millions of francs—wages have gone up during the decade since the Mont Cenis tunnel was made, but the main item of extra expense is a brick lining. The rock was scarcely anywhere solid enough to do without this. Besides forming the last link in the old, old road between east and west, from Constantinople through Ulm and Ratisbon across to France, the Arlberg line is of local value. Bludenz, whose people have had to migrate every winter, because their upland valley will grow little except cherry-trees, will be glad to exchange its kirschwasser against Hungarian wheat, but it is to be hoped this quaint corner of Europe will not have its tourists, although the iron-horse is now ready to carry them past without stopping. Ethnologically, the people are remarkable; they spoke Romansch till the sixteenth century, and the names of most of the places and

some of the natural features (e.g., the Scesa Plana) are still Romansch. But everybody now speaks German, which, as there is no record of any great Teutonic immigration or dying out of the old stock, is remarkable. Perhaps the change may be due to the neighbourhood of the pass, along which there has always been much carrying to and fro of merchandise between Trieste and Switzerland. This Arlberg Pass is an old favourite. It often has twenty feet of snow in the winter, and is seldom free for more than the three months from July to October. The gloomy monotony of its fir-woods makes it look more Tyrolese than Swiss. Look at its hospice, if you go over it. It was built by a poor foundling, Henry Findelkind, cowboy to a farmer of those parts. He was so moved by the sight of the dead people, their eyes picked out and their faces torn by birds, that he determined, with the help of God and St. Christopher, to do something to help them. In ten years' service he saved fifteen gulden, and with this small sum he began, rescuing seven travellers the first winter. In the summer he wandered over Europe asking alms, and got many princes to enrol themselves in the brotherhood of St. Christopher's Hospice. Before he died, he had saved at least fifty lives. The carriage-road is older than most; it dates from that Joseph the Second whose praises, as "the good despot," Goethe sings so enthusiastically—"Yes, he was a despot, truly, Such a despot as the sun; Who, untired, dispensing blessings, Hastens his genial course to run."

I do not know whether the opening of this line will do us any harm. Already we get doors and windows ready-made from Norway. In the Arlberg country the people make wooden houses which take to pieces, and can be packed and sent anywhere. Perhaps, by-and-by, we shall have these imported to set up as model cottages.

But the Alps are not likely to have any more tunnels yet a while. The French keep agitating about the Simplon, which, after all, would not suit them a quarter as well as the St. Gothard suits Germany. An enthusiastic Swiss engineer M. Huber, kept going, a year ago—perhaps keeps going still—the Bulletin Mensuel du Tunnel du Simplon, in which he tries to rouse the French by showing how well the St. Gothard was paying, and how large it was tapping their trade; but where is the money to come from? Besides, it would

no good to the French Mediterranean ports, and would not be on French soil in any part of its course. That is why another set of projectors goes in for Mont Blanc, which would be only another Mont Cenis route, while another set proposes to tunnel the great St. Bernard at as high an elevation as the North and Central Pacific lines, or that from Calcutta to Darjeeling. This would be literally a rail and tunnel in the clouds; and there it is likely to remain, for France has many better ways of spending her money, even if she does not waste it in an attempt to get the provinces that she lost in 1871.

### SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

#### OUR GOOD MAN.

So often has the name of Mr. Winsor, the Squire of Skitfield, been mentioned in these papers, that it seems to me I should be leaving an important figure in Shillingbury life undescribed in not giving him a sketch all to himself; but, on the other hand, so much has been said of him incidentally, that I fear I have left but little to relate concerning him when posed for the central figure of the picture. But then a man like Mr. Winsor filled no inconsiderable space in English society as a whole, and to a certain section of the religious world the London season would have lost its great attraction if Mount Ephraim, Mr. Winsor's spacious and well-appointed house in the Regent's Park, had been closed. Looming thus large amongst the magnates of the metropolis, it is not to be wondered at that Mr. Winsor should have soared a very mountain-peak over the heads of his insignificant surrounding neighbours in a country district like our own, and about such a man, in such a place, there must of necessity be many things to say; so I will take courage and set to work to describe, not indeed my own ideal "good man," but the good man conforming most closely to the standard of the philanthropic platform and of the Evangelical press.

Charles Ansonius Winsor was born in the last year of the last century. In his character and in his career he seemed specially destined to give the lie to all those theories which seek to establish the continuity of hereditary traits. The tastes and habits of his father, the early associations and influences of his home, were assuredly not those out of which one would expect to find springing a man whose name was

destined to be trumpeted forth, with the fullest blast that Exeter Hall could blow, as the munificent patron of missionary enterprise all over the world, and of all possible societies for the total abolition and utter extinction of most of those things in which the unregenerate chiefly delight: a man who, although not exactly a teetotaller himself, was loud in condemnation of drunkenness, and on the evils of gin-drinking in particular; and it would, perhaps, have been a trifle inconsistent had the senior partner in the great brewing firm of Winsor, Mudgebury, and Matlock condemned all malt liquors out of hand: a man who looked upon theatres and horse-racing and other less innocent forms of recreation as so many snares of the tempter, and nothing else. Those people who had any remembrance of his father, Mr. Thomas Winsor, or, as he was more familiarly known, Highflying Tom, were wont to say that the son must have been a changeling. In a placid and slow-moving world like that of Shillingbury, traditions of any sort have a wonderful vitality. The sayings and doings of very commonplace people who have gone over to the majority linger in the memory of the living, decade after decade, and, naturally, the words and deeds of Highflying Tom became a sort of legend, for he was by no means a commonplace person. Though not carrying social weight enough to be numbered amongst the immediate associates of George Prince Regent, our good man's father did his best to rival, in his own particular circle, the exploits of that delectable band. The portly figure of Highflying Tom was always to be seen at every prize-fight, or cocking-match, or horse-race, or badger-baiting, or dog-fight within a wide radius of the metropolis. He was a hard drinker at table, and a hard rider over the Essex country, in which he kept his horses, filling up his unoccupied leisure with the society of his groomers and stable-helpers, and the perpetration of gross practical jokes. The brewery he left to the care of his junior partners, and, though the people drank plentifully, and the business grew apace, it did not grow fast enough to fill the gaps in the capital made by Highflying Tom's extravagance, and it is highly probable that he would have died a beggar if he had not broken his neck in a run with the Essex fox-hounds. He left two children—a boy aged five, the Mr. Winsor with whom we have to deal, and a girl, afterwards married to

Sir Robert Matlock, one of the junior partners in the brewery firm.

By his will he left his two children under the guardianship of his wife, and of her brother, Mr. Josiah Grittle, a member of the Society of Friends. The mother was a weak-minded woman, in delicate health, who had been a mere cypher in the household during the life of her husband, and she now resigned herself entirely to the guidance of her brother in fulfilling the weighty charge in which they were jointly concerned. Her husband's habits and manner of life had given her much trouble, and there was good reason for this if half the stories related about the domestic irregularities of Highflying Tom were true. Mrs. Winsor had found her chief recreation in attending the services at St. George's, Bloomsbury; and when she was left a widow she moved, under the advice of her brother, to Clapham, where she took sittings in a church exactly to her mind, and now and then attended the Friends' meeting-house as well. As soon as her son was old enough, a young man of unimpeachable morals and sobriety was engaged as his tutor, and in due course he was sent to Cramleigh Castle School, an establishment then in great favour amongst the nobility and gentry of a serious turn.

Thus the subject of the present memoir was removed at an early age from all the deleterious influences to which he would infallibly have been subjected had his father merely broken his leg or arm, instead of his neck; but one outward and visible sign of the whims and tendencies of his parent he was fated to carry all his life through. A few weeks before the birth of his son and heir, Highflying Tom had netted a good round sum at Newmarket, over a race won by a horse named Ansonius, and, in spite of all the remonstrances of his family, he insisted that the new-born child should be named after the noble quadruped which had done him so good a turn. "And I only wish he may do as well as a man as Ansonius has done as a horse," was the remark he made afterwards at dinner to the Rev. Dr. Tickell, the divine who had just performed the sacred rite.

The young Ansonius remained at school till he was nearly twenty, and was then drafted straight into the counting-house of the firm without having had given to him any opportunity of germinating, in the course of a university career, any wild oats unconsciously latent in his nature. Every morning a neat brougham, driven by the soberest of coachmen, would deposit him

at the brewery gates, and there he would spend the day fathoming the mysteries of book-keeping by double entry, and later on in mastering the secret process whereby "Winsor's Entire" was concocted; learning how to blend the chemical elements into that seductive fluid which was known in the humbler walks of metropolitan life as "Mile End Knock-me-down." About three in the afternoon the brougham would be at the gate again, and Ansonius would be driven back to Clapham, finishing the afternoon, if the weather were fine, in calling with his mother upon some of their neighbours, or if unfavourable, in some home recreation suited to the disposition of a serious young man. He read whatever books had not been inscribed in the very comprehensive "index expurgatorius" of his Uncle Josiah. He played on an organ, which had been set up in what had once been the billiard-room of the house at Clapham. He was assistant secretary to three or four charitable societies of the complexion favoured by Clapham, and he had a mild taste for growing roses.

Certain youths there are of a temperament so balanced as to be able to possess their souls in patience under a discipline like the above, and to feed contentedly on such a regimen without hankering after the forbidden fruits of the frivolous world: fruits tabooed, indeed, but hanging, as a rule, well within the reach of an enterprising hand; but happily the above-named are not very numerous. According to a well-authenticated legend, Charles Ansonius Winsor was not to be numbered amongst them; though anyone, knowing only the moral citizen and middle-aged philanthropist, would have declared him incapable of making a moral stumble and much more of coming down on all-fours. Had I been told, in my youth, the story of any peccadillo on the part of our good man, I should have been just as incredulous. That a man of such prosperous-looking, benevolent, clean-shaven countenance, who walked up the aisle of Skitfield Church with such an air of righteous abasement, and read the responses in tones so mellow and at the same time so devout, should deviate one hair's-breadth from the straight path of good conduct at any period of his life, I should have regarded as impossible—just as impossible as that the Archangel Michael should have been caught stealing apples out of Farmer Wilkins's orchard. But illumination on this point did not come

to me till I had seen the manners and the cities of divers sorts of men, and learnt that the wisest and coolest heads may fail when temptation comes to them in the form under which it well-nigh vanquished the rugged virtue of St. Anthony, St. Senanas, and the like. Anyhow, there was a story, and the version of it most generally accepted in Shillingbury ran somewhat as follows:—

Amongst the charitable institutions favoured with the patronage of Mrs. Winsor and her worthy brother Josiah was a school in Bermondsey for the children of decayed watermen. As an institution it was fairly good of its kind, though to the contemporary believers in a system of organised charity it would, no doubt, have seemed a little unjust that the children of watermen, who had fallen to decay through taking life easy and spending an undue proportion of it in the public-house, should be well fed, and clothed, and taught, while the offspring of respectable Tom Tugs, who plied their wherries and paid their way, should have to face alone the hard fight with poverty. But to those who were not over curious as to remoter consequences, the school was a satisfactory institution. It had something to show for the money which was spent over it in the shape of rows of neat little girls and chubby little boys; it was an entertaining plaything for the worthy Clapham folk, and it furnished employment to two of their trusted dependents—Barzillai Chapman, who ruled the boys, and Anne Barnett, who looked after the little girls.

Under the kindly nurture of Mrs. Barnett, several generations of girls grew up—some of them, it is to be feared, destined to develop into wives of decayed watermen themselves in after life—but in the lapse of time the schoolmistress grew feeble and unfitted to discharge unaided the task of looking after a score of more or less unruly girls, so, with the full assent and concurrence of the ruling powers, she associated with herself in the management of the school her daughter Pleasance, who had, up to this time, been a lady's-maid in the service of a friend of Mrs. Winsor, a Mrs. Pettigrew, a lady whose principles were as correct as if she had lived at Clapham instead of in the more worldly and frivolous neighbourhood of Hyde Park Gardens. Pleasance Barnett was a fresh-looking, well-mannered girl of some twenty-six summers when she entered upon her new duties. She was not exactly good-looking, but she

was of that healthy, full-blooded type which is seldom unpleasant in a young woman. She set about her teaching work at once, and, although no doubt the hair of a school-manager of the present era would stand erect at the bare thought of a lady's-maid of one week being constituted an instructress of youth the next, she did well enough. She did not know much, it is true, but she possessed the faculty of imparting her slender stock of knowledge to her pupils, a faculty not always present, I believe, in instructors nowadays, who hold the highest certificates. What the little girls learnt was, probably, quite sufficient to equip them for their voyage through life, and not one of them fell a victim to "over-pressure" so long as Miss Pleasance was in office. Mrs. Winsor would visit the school almost every day; her brother, Josiah, looked in several times during the week; and young Mr. Charles would pay a visit of inspection now and then on his way home from the brewery. The latter, however, did not show quite so much interest in the school as his mother hoped he might have done; but there was some reason for this, as he had just set going the Bermondsey Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society and Provident Club, and spent a great part of his leisure in discharging the duties of honorary secretary to the same.

About a year after Miss Barnett's installation as assistant-teacher, she began to complain about her health, which had hitherto been of the strongest. She was a little paler than formerly, but there were few outward signs of serious mischief. Still she affirmed that she could not sleep, that she had constant headaches, and divers other symptoms of overwork; so one day her mother went to Mrs. Winsor and begged that Pleasance might be excused from her school duties for a time. She had been invited to stay a month with a former fellow-servant who was now married and living at Bideford, and she had no doubt that the spell of country air would quite restore her. Mrs. Winsor, of course, gave her consent, a substitute was found, and Miss Pleasance set out to regain her lost roses in the Devonshire air.

Meantime Mr. Charles was working very hard on behalf of the young men of Bermondsey, and a looker-on would have said that if those youths, after such exertions as he was making on their behalf, failed to mutually improve one another, or to lay by a competence against old age, they must



have been infected by something worse than mere human depravity. He lectured to them in the evening, and he imported other philanthropists as long-winded and as urgent as himself, to add their "few words" to his own exhortations. He fitted up and stocked a reading-room and library at his own cost, and even went so far as to start a coffee-shop under the very nose of the brewery of Winsor, Mudgebury, and Matlock. This last step provoked a protest from the more secular-minded members of the firm, who held that good malt liquor, such as they themselves provided, was the proper drink for Englishmen, and that there was far too much coffee and cocoa, and such like rubbish, drunk already; but they disquieted themselves without reason. The beverage retailed at young Mr. Charles's house of entertainment was the coffee of the pre-coffee-tavern era, and few patrons paid it a second visit, so the shop, not turning out a commercial success, soon closed its doors.

Young Mr. Charles, however, was not to be disconcerted by one failure, and one morning he rather astonished his mother by informing her that he was going for a few days to Liverpool to study the working of a very successful Young Men's Institute there established. Mrs. Winsor had hardly ever yet known what it was to lose sight of her son for more than four-and-twenty hours, and she felt all that a good mother might be expected to feel under the circumstances; but her time was pretty well occupied in supervising the temporary regime at the girls' school, so she bade good-bye to her young hopeful without shedding tears, and told him to take every care of himself. In the course of a week she received from him a letter bearing the Liverpool post-mark, which told her how greatly he was pleased with his expedition, and how much knowledge he had gained on the subject of Young Men's Institutes since he had been in Liverpool. He would not, however, be back in Clapham quite so soon as he had expected. Mr. Simcox, the gentleman who had so kindly taken him about Liverpool, was going through Wales and had suggested that he should go likewise. They would reach Cardiff by Sunday, and there Mr. Charles would make a point of going to sit under the Rev. Silas Biley, the local divine, of whom he had so often heard his uncle Josiah speak in laudatory terms.

Then after three or four days there

came a letter from Tenby. The young traveller had caught rather a bad cold, and had been advised by a doctor at Swansea to go for a few days to the above-named watering-place to shake off his ailment. Another and another letter came. The cold was rather obstinate; but the writer felt so much the better for the mild air and the clear sky that he was unwilling to hurry back to the fogs and damps of London until he should be perfectly restored, much as he wished to see them all again. As an earnest of the mildness of the climate, he sent his mother a box of early violets and crocuses, which were already in full bloom in the garden of the hotel where he was staying.

But all this was nothing else than the deceitful calm before the storm—"The torrent's stillness ere it doth bellow;" for on a certain Sunday morning, just as Mrs. Winsor was gathering together her books of devotion, preparatory to going to church, a carriage drove rapidly up to the door, and out of it jumped Mr. Josiah Grittle, with a quickness of movement quite foreign to his usual sedate demeanour. He brought to his sister a letter, sent to him from an unknown hand, which began by asking whether it was a fact known to the family at Clapham that Mr. Charles Ansonius Winsor had recently entered the estate of matrimony. The writer opined that such fact was not known where it naturally should be, or why should the gentleman above-named be now living at the Cambrian Hotel at Tenby under the style of Mr. Winslow Spencer, with a Mrs. Winslow Spencer, and the names of both duly inscribed in the visitors'-book?

Never had there passed such a Sunday at the house in Clapham before. There were no Sunday trains direct to Tenby in those days, otherwise I believe Mr. Grittle would have cast all his Sabbatarian principles to the winds, and started westward to test the truth of the fatal sheet he had just perused. On Monday, however, at an early hour, he was on the wing, and for three days he was absent. What happened during those three fateful days was not, and never will be, made known to the vulgar mind, which has had to be content with the fact that Mr. Grittle, when he returned, brought with him Mr. Charles still apparently a bachelor; but the secret by some means or other leaked out. No body ever saw the Mrs. Spencer Winslow of the Tenby escapade, but the vulgar

mind soon satisfied itself that she was no other person than Miss Pleasance Barnett. Certainly the facts that this young lady was seen no more in her place as assistant-teacher to the little girls at the decayed watermen's school, and that Mrs. Barnett herself was relegated to private life upon a small pension, gave some colour to these suspicions. Mr. Charles plunged into philanthropy with greater zeal than ever, and in the course of two years married a wife selected for him by his mother, so either that story about a private marriage must have been false, or he must have lost his wife soon after the wedding.

When he reached middle life, Mr. Winsor left the business duties of the brewery to the junior partners, and retired to the enjoyment of the estate which he had purchased at Skitfield. He took his share of the burthens of public life which fall upon the shoulders of men of his class. He sat upon our Shillingbury bench of magistrates, but not as chairman, for Sir Thomas Kedgbury, though junior in years, was senior as a justice of the peace. This fact, combined with a complete antagonism between the two magnates on all possible subjects of controversy, made the attendance of Mr. Winsor somewhat desultory, and it used to be remarked that, whenever there was a case to be tried which promised to bring unpopularity upon the worshipful adjudicators, Mr. Winsor always left the decision of it to his colleagues. His friends assigned this to his extreme delicacy of feeling, which made him shrink from wounding the susceptibilities of anyone; but less kindly critics found in it merely the desire to make friends with the Mammon of unrighteousness, a proceeding which commonplace folks find sometimes a little equivocal, in spite of the high authority in its favour.

By the time he came amongst us the memory of the Tenby episode—a story which had been transmitted to us through many mouths, and no doubt adorned with many factitious incidents—had greatly paled. There were, indeed, Winsorians staunch enough to maintain that the whole affair was a vile conspiracy, got up by the enemies who never fail to lie in wait around the paths of good men, seeking occasions to blaspheme; but, as a rule, any stranger, after having been regaled with an account of our good man's good deeds, would be treated to a sort of postscript: "When he was a young man, they do

say," and so on. "Some people say there was no truth in it; but still," and all the rest of it. The summing-up, however, would nearly always be in Mr. Winsor's favour.

As long as Bishop Chicham ruled our diocese the ecclesiastical plums in that prelate's disposition fell largely to the share of those divines who could bring forward testimonials from Mr. Winsor. There was little chance that the Bishop would ever be called upon to do outrage to his feelings by nominating a man of incorrect views, for his own opinions and Mr. Winsor's coincided to a nicety, and there was, besides this, another reason for treating with respect any hints which might fall from the eminent layman. The prelate, good man, was by no means deficient in the serpent's wisdom, and, as he made a sum in simple addition of Mr. Winsor's contributions to societies dear to his own heart, and saw the goodly total they made, he decided that this was a man to be humoured at all cost. His decision may have been hastened by the fact that he knew of cases in which Mr. Winsor's displeasure had shown itself in swift and telling blows against the individual who had presumed to cross him, the text concerning the forgiveness of our enemies notwithstanding.

At the end of May, when the platform workers, and secretaries, and "deputations" would begin to wax a trifle weary by reason of their prolonged wrestle with the enemy in the Exeter Hall arena, there would usually be a gathering of those engaged in "the work" in the pleasant groves of Skitfield, there to renew their wasted energies for a fresh campaign; but even then they could not endure to be wholly idle. Merely to keep their hands in, there would be gathered together a meeting in the village school-room at least three evenings in the week, which had to be addressed on some subject or another, and it was a moral certainty that there would be a fresh divine in the pulpit at Skitfield Church every morning and evening as long as the gathering lasted, so great would be the company of the preachers. Sometimes, indeed, it was found necessary to take a leaf out of the enemy's book, and put on week-day services, so as to give to all a chance of being heard, and thus prevent the heartburning which would assuredly have ensued had any clerical guest been obliged to take his departure bearing amongst his luggage an undelivered sermon. Sometimes the visitors overflowed

into our church at Shillingbury, where Mr. Northborough readily surrendered his pulpit to be free of the necessity of composing and delivering a sermon. In order to assure the world that there was nothing unsound, no slavish adherence to the rubric, in the before-named week-day services at Skitfield, care was taken to hold them always on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Mr. Laporte used to say, with a touch of satire, that doubtless Mr. Winsor had so arranged them in order that any of his friends who might wish could walk over to Bletherton to the Wednesday and Friday services held there.

But Mr. Winsor's course, even down in Folkshire, where he ruled with hardly a possible rival, was not destined to be one of unchequered success. The first mischance that befell him was that untoward promotion of the Rev. Onesiphorus Tulke to the rectory of Pudsey. No friend would have been found candid enough to tell him that, in the selection of a curator of souls for the villagers of Pudsey, he had thought too much of the Boanerges assaults of Mr. Tulke against the Popish proceedings at Bletherton, and too little of the fitness of the man for the work; but in those solitary moments, when he had to realise all the bitterness of mistake and failure, he must have admitted, good man as he was, that he might have been more wary in the stewardship of the good things committed to him. Then the death of his old friend the Bishop, and the appointment of Dr. Coser, a known High Churchman, to the vacant see, was a cruel blow. In these latter days, Mr. Laporte and Mr. Cutler Bridgman might play what Ritualistic vagaries they would, and he could no longer hold episcopal terrors in Bishop Chicham's name over their heads. So rapid and marked was the change in clerical views, following upon the change of Bishop, that Mr. Winsor could no longer stand up in the diocesan meetings of the religious societies, and, after speaking for twenty minutes in reverent silence, sit down amidst a round of applause. Irritating comments, expressive of dissent, and sarcastic cheers now frequently interrupted his discourse; and after one memorable occasion, when he was called to order by the Bishop himself, who was in the chair, he gave up attending altogether.

But the stream of his benevolence was not dried up by this rebuff. He poured out his guineas as liberally as heretofore

to help to bring all men to his way of thinking, and to control the growth of the rising generation, so that it should be abounding in men fashioned after the model of his proper self. This was his infirmity; for he had never learnt the great lesson which is imparted to commonplace folk in the homely proverb, that one man's meat is another's poison. Mr. Winsor, and others like him, are much affected by the social satirist as targets for the most keenly barbed arrows; and so far as narrow-minded bigotry and pharisaic shortsightedness are concerned, the assault is justified. Our good man was, no doubt, too well satisfied with himself, and the moral spectacles he wore made him blind to the merits of all those who would not utter his own particular shibboleth, but he had within his soul that something which "makes for righteousness." He hated to see men drunken, and dissolute, and profane, and he devoted a large portion of his wealth to the work of winning them to better courses. Thick-and-thin political economists would doubtless be ready to prove that nine-tenths of the money he gave away created more misery than it cured; but, then, doctrinaires of this sort will tell you that it is wrong to help a man who is lying with a broken leg in a ditch, since by so doing you render others less careful to avoid similar pitfalls. There was the will in him to do good, and, in carrying out this will, even in his own faulty and narrow-minded fashion, he seems to stand out heroically when compared with the indolent, colourless saunterer through life who averts his eyes from the sordid spectacles—the fruit of human misery—lest by doing so he should vex his own dear soul. Money spent upon the societies chiefly favoured by Mr. Winsor may not have been spent most productively, but it did not, at any rate, debase him to the type of those slow-blooded sensualists who find it necessary to spend all their substance in pampering their bodies, and in wooing those thousand and one costly distractions which men of vacant mind find necessary to scare away the ministers of ennui which roost so persistently in their empty brain-pans.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

No. 871. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8, 1885.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## ONLY A BUSINESS MAN.

By MAY DRYDEN.

### CHAPTER XXVI.

It was half-past five on Monday morning, and autumn was now well advanced, so that the early mornings were by no means so pleasant as they had been through the long summer months.

Autumn does not come so kindly to us Northern folk as it does in the South of England. Here the leaves do not hang on the trees to fall at last in a ruddy old age, making brown, and red, and yellow heaps of beauty in the lanes and byeways; here they fall while still green, and the rain and fog make of them unpleasing masses of decaying vegetation. These same rain and fog, with their accompanying chilling, damp winds, make us long for the more genuine and wholesome cold of winter. Altogether, autumn is a sad time, a depressing period of the year with us; we see so little of the genial ripeness and richness of the vegetable world, so little of the fulness of the harvest, and so much of the dreary falling to pieces, the rapid decay of summer's lovely structure.

This autumn was a specially sad one to many, full of ominous forebodings, which were to come with early winter to a terrible fulfilment.

Even Minnie Leighton, frivolous, gay-hearted little butterfly that she was, was affected by the general depression, and kept close to Deborah's side as they went silently to their work in the Hollow. Not even Long Tom could tempt her from her sister's protection on this morning, so he was fain to walk with her and Deborah, an arrangement which probably suited him better than being with Minnie alone.

He talked all the way, in his character of

noisy agitator, giving many hints of troubles to come and of great doings in which he was to take a prominent part.

Deborah was absent-minded; seeing that he did not mean to tell her anything definite or new, she made no answer to all his grandiloquent speeches. But Minnie slipped her little hand under the young man's arm with an appealing touch, and said gently:

"Oh, Tom dear, I'm afraid thou'll be gettin' into trouble."

"And what if I do get into trouble, my lass? There's always some must suffer for the good of the rest. But never thou fear, Minnie; if thee and Deborah 'll trusten to me, I'll see to thee."

"I'll trust none to thee, Tom," said Deborah coldly. "Thou knows as well as I do thou'st in a wrong course altogether."

Tom frowned and bit his lip, but could not keep down a blush. It was wonderful to see what a power over him and others Deborah's opinion was.

They were silent now, for they were entering the mill-yard, and even Debby sighed and looked sorry when she saw Mark Fenchurch standing by the mill-doors, scanning with a keen and stern look the faces of his workpeople as they entered to their work, and now and then making a remark aside to Gordon.

Mark Fenchurch was a hard man, and much disliked amongst his hands. One little saying, current amongst them, was very characteristic of the man, and showed how differently from Gordon he was judged. All Lancashire folk know what "waste" is, and how important it is that there should be as little of it as possible. Fenchurch's hands used to say:

When Gordon Fenchurch comes round this place, Says he, "My dear, pick up this waste."

When Mark Fenchurch comes round this place, Says he, "You devil, pick up this waste!"

This morning, as Tom went in at the door, he contrived to stumble, so as to brush clumsily against his master's arm. Mark, turning angrily, bade him mind what he was about. The workman, standing still, stared full in the face of the other, and replied insolently and in his broadest dialect:

"Moind thisel', wilta, Fenchurch!"

In spite of a warning touch from Gordon, Mark answered again, quickly but quietly:

"You need not go in to your work to-day. Consider yourself discharged."

"Aw' reet," said Tom. "It's coom a bit sooner nor I thought for, bu' it's aw' reet."

He turned and went away, and Gordon said sadly:

"You have given the signal for a strike, Mark, and perhaps worse."

"I can't help that," said Mark. "Better a strike than rank insubordination. That fellow has been in mischief a long time."

"I knew that, too," said Gordon. "But I hoped to get rid of him quietly. We may be prepared for rough doings now. I think you hardly realise how much ill-feeling towards us there is amongst these people."

Everything went on in the mill that morning with ominous smoothness. The overlookers found less occasion than usual for the sharp rebukes of carelessness and idleness they were generally obliged to dispense. But Long Tom's two looms stood empty, and his young brother, a sharp lad of fifteen, asked of his next-door neighbour:

"Where's eaur Tom?"

"He's gotten th' sack," was the reply.

"Pass th' word on then," said the lad. "Thou know'st the sign."

The word was passed on, and the result was that after the dinner-hour that day, Deborah, her father, and some twenty more were all of the six hundred hands who worked for the Fenchurches who presented themselves at the yard-gates. So the engines were stopped, and the mill-doors closed, and the great body stood lifeless, wanting the human adjuncts that made its vast mechanism available.

Silence reigned that afternoon in Wilton, but towards evening knots of men, who had been loitering at the street-corners since noon, began to gather into larger groups, and were joined by others who came strolling in from the surrounding districts. Phoebe Carfield, hastening home in the dusk of the evening, noticed the gathering crowd, noticed, too, that she met none of the mill-girls as was usual at this

time, and felt so uneasy that she called at the Holme to ask Clarence if she knew whether anything was the matter. Clarence did know, and was very uneasy. Gordon and Mark were down at the mill, she said; Peter was with them, and she believed they wanted Luke too.

"I will go and send him," said Phoebe quietly. "He will just be home to tea, and then, Clarence, I shall come back here. I could not bear to be waiting up at home and knowing nothing about it. I may come, may I not?"

"Yes; and oh, Phoebe, bring Matty! Dick is down at the mill, too. Phoebe dear, if we must be anxious, let us be anxious together to-night. I only wish Deborah were here too."

Phoebe hurried home, and dispatched Luke to the mill, and with Matty returned to the Holme. She was none too soon. In another hour the streets were almost impassable, and a murmur began to be heard through the dark, as of a large and angry crowd.

#### CHAPTER XXVII.

THE noise in the one street of Wilton grew, as the twilight deepened into dark. The three girls, sitting together in the little study at the Holme, and waiting anxiously for news, could distinguish the voices of the people as they passed, singing and shouting, by the gate on their way from Pardborough to the Hollow. Presently they heard music, and Matty ran to one of the front windows and flung it up. Through a break in the evergreens she could see the road, and, coming along it, what seemed to her a vast crowd. In reality, there were probably not more than two hundred people, but, crushing and crowding upon each other in tumultuous disorder, they appeared to be many more. Drawn at their head, in a costermonger's cart, which some ten or a dozen lads pushed and pulled in noisy glee, were three worthies of Pardborough, well known by sight to Matty. These were an old itinerant musician, with his son and grandson, who followed the same trade. They were no mean performers, when, as seldom happened, they were sober, and they were known as Old Sam Sims, young Sam Sims, and young Sam Sims's son.

In spite of her anxiety, Matty's spirit rose as she watched and listened. She was one of those people to whom fear of physical danger is unknown, nay, who even experience a certain strange exhilaration

in presence of it. Clarence was brave, too, but in a different way. As she looked she turned white.

"These are none of them our work-people," said she. "They are the Irishmen from Pardborough. Oh, Phoebe! They might have managed our own men, but what can they possibly do against these?"

At that moment the door opened behind them, and, turning, they saw Deborah. Clarence sprang forward and seized her hands.

"Oh, Deborah, we have been wanting you so!" cried she. "How did you come? You must stay now and help us to wait."

"Nay, that I cannot," said Deborah, speaking quietly but with a thrill of intense excitement in her fine musical voice. "Thank Heaven, I have sommut to do besides wait—that would kill me! I've come from th' mills, and I want th' measter's pistols."

"I will get them," said Clarence, leaving the room at once, while Phoebe, gently pushing Deborah into a chair, said:

"Rest and tell us—please tell us what is going on in the Hollow."

"They've fired th' reading-room, and they're set on firing th' mills. They're gone clean mad, I think. An' th' rowdies from th' country round are there, and as I came up I met th' Pardbro' roughs. Oh, why does not Miss Clarence make haste? I'll be too late!"

"She's coming. Tell me, Deborah, how came they to send you?"

"I'm known to our lads, yo' sea. None of 'em would touch me. I brought Master Peter with me to th' station wi' my shawl over his head to pass him for a lass. He has gone to Homcester for the soldiers. Good-bye!"

Seizing the pistols which Clarence held out to her, she disappeared again. Matty closed the dining-room window, and returned to the study with flashing eyes and heightened colour.

"Girls," said she, "I want to go down to the mills; I can't stay shut up here any longer. I shall go."

"No," said Phoebe softly but very decidedly; "you must stay here, Matty. What could you do? You would only make them more anxious."

"Deborah is there," said Matty wilfully.

"Yes," said Phoebe; "but we are not like Deborah; we can only stay here and envy her."

Down at the mills, Mark and Gordon Fenchurch, Luke Carfield and Dick, shut

into the counting-house, were waiting with what patience they might the return of Deborah or the arrival of the soldiers from Homcester. The light from the burning reading-room opposite filled the room, and just now the fire was great enough to occupy the attention of the crowd, who were every moment becoming more mad. Gordon paced the room in his usual manner, with bent head and clasped hands; the others watched the conflagration with growing excitement. Suddenly Mark, who for an hour past had hardly been able to control his anger, and whose curses had been loud and deep, exclaimed, "I shall speak to them!" and flung up the window.

"For Heaven's sake, no!" cried Gordon, springing to his side and trying to draw him back. He was too late; already he had been noticed, and with a shout of triumph twenty or thirty men had sprung towards the window which was nearly on a level with the ground, and had drawn him through it. Gordon leaped after him, and Dick would have followed but that one of the men pushed him back, saying:

"Now, measter, this is none o' thy pudden'; keep thy fingers eaut o' th' mixin' o' 't, wilsta? We'n nowt agen' ye!"

A dozen hands were stretched out to close the window again, and in a moment the brothers Fenchurch were in the midst of the crowd, pulled this way and that, jeered at, cursed at, and hustled. Gordon was absolutely quiescent—content so long as he knew that Clarence and Phoebe were safe at the Holme, and that, for the present at any rate, the mills were safe, since the crowd had him and Mark to wreak their vengeance on—rather him than his beloved machinery. Clarence had often told him he cared for his looms and his engines more than for his life, and he remembered her saying so now, and even smiled to find how true it was. Then he thought of Phoebe, and suddenly recollected that only so lately as yesterday he had made up his mind to try whether life had not still in store for him its greatest blessing, and the thought that he was leaving it caused him to feel a deeper pang of regret than he had ever thought it possible death would bring him. Then he knew no more, for a stone, flung by one of the Pardborough roughs, struck his temple, and he became insensible.

Meantime Mark, swearing and struggling like a madman, and amidst the hooting and laughter of the crowd, was borne up the street towards Pardborough.

It must be remembered that this was not a crowd of angry men fighting for the redress of any real grievance. Long Tom, the ringleader, was undoubtedly actuated by the keenest of all possible human motives—intense personal hatred of Gordon. He was much admired by his fellow-workmen, and many took part in the riot merely because he led them, and believed that they had a grievance because he said so.

Many, again, thought it a fine opportunity for repaying with interest Mark's stern, keen supervision, contemptuous manner, and rough words. But the most dangerous element of the crowd was composed of the Irishmen, the very dregs of the population of Pardborough, a place which, even when it wore its best side out, had the reputation of being the worst-conducted village for many a mile round, and that, too, in a mining district where in every village good manners and good morals were at a discount.

Deborah, leaving the Holme gate, had made the best of her way back to the Hollow. But she had to follow in the track of the Pardborough contingent, nor could she induce these men, to none of whom she was known, to allow her to pass them. Thus it happened that, instead of forcing her way back to the counting-house, as she had intended, she was for a long time detained helpless on the edge of the crowd.

It was well that she was so detained, for, as the human mass surged towards Pardborough, she was engulfed in it, and a minute later found herself brought face to face with Mark Fenchurch and his captors.

It was not in her strong and decided nature to waste time in thinking. Had she done so, her golden opportunity would have been lost. With one quick movement, she placed herself at her master's side. As good fortune would have it, the young men who held him were Wilton men, neither of them much past boyhood, and both of them accustomed to see in Deborah a recognised judge of right and wrong. They fell back as she approached, instinctively trying to lose themselves in the crowd before she could recognise them, and, leaving no time for their places to be taken by others, Deborah thrust a pistol into the hand of Mark Fenchurch.

"This is for Mr. Gordon," said she, holding up the other. "Tell me where he is."

Mark was no coward. He would never have dreamt of trying to leave the crowd without his brother. Pistol in hand, he had the advantage of his opponents, and he at once turned with Deborah to endeavour to rejoin Gordon. They had not far to seek. In the course of a few minutes they came upon Long Tom and Ben Crossley, holding the younger Fenchurch between them. Catching sight of his pallid face and closed eyes, Deborah for the moment thought him dead, and, trembling from head to foot, she almost lost her self-command, and fainted, but not quite. Recovering instantly, she spoke out in a strong, clear, passionately-indignant voice:

"Shame on ye—ashame on ye! Hundreds of you trying to kill two men, and those two them as have found you bread to eat and clothes to wear! Aye, they have, for they've found you work to do, and him that you've killed there has been more tender and loving over you than your own fathers. Oh, I hate you—I'm ashamed of you—I'm loth to own you for Lancashire lads, cowards, murderers that you are!"

"Gently, lass—gently," said one of the elder men, coming forward into the little clear space that Deborah's energy had cleared around her and her employer. "Th' lad's none dead yet, nor shall be whole aw can lift a hand to help 'un."

"Take hold of him, then," said Deborah. "And you," turning fiercely on Long Tom, "let him go this instant!"

Tom's face, on which the usual sullen look had been replaced by an expression of almost feverish delight, fell, but he did not relax his hold on Gordon's arm. He looked round for someone to back him up, and saw his followers pressing back on each other in their efforts to shun the scorn and severity of judgment they read in Deborah's eyes.

So the Lancashire man and woman stood face to face; of the same county, even of the same village, and fellow-workers together since they could use a shuttle or tie an end, and yet they were far as the poles asunder. In that moment Tom recognised the fact that, infinitely above him as Deborah had always been, his action of to-night had opened a gulf between them which no future efforts of his would ever be able to bridge over.

Hope left him then, and the Devil entered into him, as surely he does into all of us once or twice in our lifetime; only God is often merciful to us, and does not

allow our time of possession to be when our evil passions could bear fruit in evil action.

"Loose him!" said Deborah again.

She began to doubt whether she could rule this man before her, mad as he was with jealousy and disappointed love. He was reckless, and she knew it and trembled, but she would not let her fear show itself. If she was to conquer, it must be by showing herself stronger than her enemy.

Tom made no answer; but suddenly loosing his hold on Gordon, he sprang upon Mark, and, before the latter was aware of it, had wrenched the pistol from his grasp. The man was young and strongly-built, the master middle-aged and small of stature. Tom flung Mark from him as easily as he would have done a child, and, turning again, took aim at Gordon as he leant against old Ben.

There was a shout and a rush, but not in time to stop his hand. The pistol was fired, and, as the smoke cleared, not Gordon but Deborah lay stretched upon the ground.

The girl, obeying her womanly instinct to protect what was dearest to her, even at the risk of her life, had flung herself between the would-be murderer and his victim. That was the end of the riot. It was all over now. The tide of feeling had turned, and Tom himself would have suffered now at the hands of the mob, but for the interference of a few of the older men, who had not quite lost their senses. These took possession of him, and would have led him away; a possibility now, for the crowd was dispersing with marvellous celerity. A rumour spread that the police and soldiery from Homcester were coming, and it would not be to anyone's interest to be found on the spot when they should arrive.

Tom, however, strenuously resisted every effort to remove him, standing dumbly, and gazing with blanched face and stupidly-staring eyes at Deborah's prostrate form.

A quarter of an hour later, when help did come, the bringers thereof found no one but the principal actors in the drama just played out: Gordon Fenchurch just regaining consciousness under the ministrations of his brother; Deborah, by whom her father knelt, trying to find out what her injuries were; Long Tom, making piteous entreaties to the men who held him to let him stay to see whether she were dead or not; and Luke, just preparing to take Gordon's slight form in his strong

arms and carry him home. Peter had gone to Homcester for the second time that night, his errand now being to bring the doctor.

### SOME FLOWERS OF FANCY.

THAT the lily should symbolise purity seems appropriate enough, but why should parsley in olden times have been associated with death? It is recorded, as we know, that a few bundles of parsley once threw a whole Greek army into panic, because in Greece the tombs of the dead were strewn with the herb. With them "to be in need of parsley" was equivalent to being beyond hope. The name itself offers little explanation of this superstition, for it is derived from the Latin *retroselium*, which again was taken from the Greek name, signifying the "plant of the rocks." According to the myth, however, it sprang from the blood of Archemorus, or Orpheltes, the son of Lycurgus of Nemæa. Archemorus was killed by a serpent while his foster-mother was showing the soldiers of Adrastus where they might find a fountain. On the place where he died there sprang up the parsley, which the Greeks, in grief for his loss, wove into chaplets for the victors at the Nemæan games. At these games it was always customary to deliver a funeral oration in memory of Archemorus, while the participators were dressed in mourning. Hence the association of parsley with death among the Greeks, and the long-prevailing Western belief that the plant is "unlucky" is only another instance of the marvellous longevity of superstitions. Professor Dyer tells us that in Devonshire to transplant parsley is accounted a serious offence against the tutelary spirit of the herb, and is certain to be punished within the year by some great misfortune. In South Hampshire, the country-people will never give parsley away, for fear of trouble; and in Suffolk it is believed that if it be sown on any other day than Good Friday, it will not grow double. The Folklore Record, not long ago, gave the case of a gentleman near Southampton, whose gardener refused to sow some parsley-seed when ordered, because "it would be a bad day's work" for him to do so; the most he would do was to bring a plant or two, and throw them down for the master to pick up if he chose. To give them, however, the man regarded as fatal.



But even to move parsley is regarded in some places to be unlucky, and we have read of a parish-clerk in Devonshire, who was bedridden, and who was popularly supposed to owe his trouble to having moved some parsley-beda. There is a similar superstition, we believe, in Germany, and many of our readers have probably often come across an old saying, that "Parsley fried will bring a man to his saddle and a woman to her grave." The allusion to the saddle is obscure; but it is obvious that all the superstitious dread of parsley is a survival of the old Greek fable immortalised in the Nemæan games.

That the rose should be associated with death may appear strange to some of our readers, yet so it was. The Greeks certainly used the rose in their funeral rites and for the decoration of their tombs. The Romans used it for similar purposes, and, we are told, often left legacies for the express purpose of keeping their tombs adorned with the flower. Whether it was by them that the practice was introduced into England is not capable of direct proof, but it is worthy of note that at Leckley, a place where the Romans were often located in large numbers, it was a custom of comparatively recent experience for girls to plant roses upon the graves of their dead lovers. Hence, no doubt, its origin in Gay's riddle:

What flower is that which royal honour craves?  
Adjoin the Virgin, and 'tis strewn on graves.

The answer is "Rosemary," which, although sometimes understood to mean the Rose of the Virgin Mary, was neither a rose, nor in any special way associated with the Virgin. On the other hand, the rose is associated by most Catholics with the Mother of the Saviour, and in Italy especially, during the celebrations of May, the rose is abundantly used. By some it has been thought that the early association of the rose with death led to the expression "under the rose," applied to anything to be done in secret or silence. Others, again, have ascribed the origin of the expression to the perfect beauty of the flower, which, as language is unable to portray it, is a symbol of silence. Sir Thomas Browne, however, says the origin was either in the old custom of wearing chaplets of roses during the "Symposiack meetings," or else because the rose was the flower of Venus, "which Cupid consecrated unto Harpocrates, the god of silence." There is a basis of probability in both theories, and we know that the rose was peculiarly the

property of the goddess of love. Indeed, according to the old fable, the flower was originally white until dyed by the blood which flowed from the foot of Venus, pierced by a thorn as she ran to the aid of her loved Adonis. Hence, Spenser says:

White as the native rose, before the change  
Which Venus' blood did in her leaves impress.

According to others, however, it was the blood of Adonis which dyed the flower. Thus Bion, in his Lament: "A tear the Paphian sheds for each blood-drop of Adonis, and tears and blood on the earth are turned to flowers. The blood brings forth the rose, and the tears the wind-flower. Woe, woe, for Adonis! he hath perished, the lovely Adonis!"

This tradition is preserved in the German name, Adonis-blume, which, however, is usually applied to the anemone. The rose, however, being the emblem of love, and love having a natural abhorrence of publicity, it is not difficult to see the connection with silence. It is said that the Romans used to place a decoration of roses in the centre of their dining-rooms, as a hint to the guests that all that was said at the banqueting-table was in the nature of "privileged communications," and in old Germany a similar custom long prevailed. In the sixteenth century a rose was placed over confessionals, and the inference is that the hint was then well understood. There was also an obvious meaning in the adoption by the Jacobites of this flower as the emblem of the Pretender, to whose service they were secretly sworn. It was the white rose which was especially affected by the Stuarts, and the Pretender's birthday, the 10th of June, was for long known as "White Rose Day," much as "Primrose Day" is now definitely associated with the late Lord Beaconsfield. Of course the story of the Wars of the Roses is known to everybody, and how, in consequence, the rose became the emblem of England, as the thistle is of Scotland, and the shamrock of Ireland.

In the East there is even more of poetic significance attached to a rose than with us. It is related of Sadi, the Persian poet, that, when a slave, he earned his freedom by the adroit use of the flower. One day he presented a rose to his master, with the remark, made with all humility, "Do good to thy servant whilst thou hast the power, for the season of power is often as transient as the duration of this flower." This was in allusion to the Eastern fancy, which makes the white rose the emblem of

life—transient and uncertain. In Persia they have a festival called "The Feast of the Roses," which lasts, as Moore tells us, during the blooming of the flowers. One of their great works is called "The Garden of Roses," and everybody knows how closely they associate the rose with the bulbul or nightingale. The belief is that the bird derives his melody from the beauteous flower, and they say, "You may place a handful of fragrant herbs and flowers before the nightingale, but he wants nothing more than the odour of his beloved rose."

Thomas Moore seizes, with happy effect, on this legend in *Lalla Rookh*, which poem, indeed, is almost redolent of roses. But poetry generally is as full of the rose as the rose is of poetry, and it would take a great deal more space than we can spare to mention all the fancies and superstitious associations of the queen of flowers. Before quitting the subject, however, we should not omit to mention the Oriental traditions of how the rose received its various colours. It is said that when Mahommed was journeying to heaven, the sweat which fell from his forehead produced white roses, and that which fell from Al Borak produced yellow roses. But an older tradition is given by Sir John Mandeville. It is that of Zillah, the beauteous maiden of Bethlehem, who, being falsely accused, was condemned to be burned alive. At the stake the flames passed over her and shrivelled up her accuser, while, on the spot where she stood, sprang up a garden of roses—red where the fire had touched, and white where it had passed. "And these werein the first roseres that ever any man saughe."

We have referred to the lily as the emblem of purity, but, curiously enough, this innocent-looking flower has its baleful superstitions as well. In Devonshire it is accounted unlucky to plant a bed of lilies-of-the-valley, and to do so is to ensure misfortune, if not death, within a year. Yet this flower has always been closely associated with the Virgin Mary, and according to one legend, it sprang from some of the milk which fell to the ground as she was nourishing the infant Jesus. The Greeks, however, had a similar legend, ascribing the origin of the flower to a drop of Juno's milk. The Greeks have always made a favourite of the lily, and even to this day use it largely in making up bridal-wreaths, while the sacred significance which Christians have found in the flower may be

traceable to Our Lord's use of it in imagery. In this connection, the legend of the budding lily of St. Joseph will be remembered, and we know that the mediæval painters generally depicted the Madonna with a lily in her hand. There is also a tradition that the lily was the principal ornament in the crown of Solomon, and typified love, charity, purity, and innocence—a combination of virtues hardly to be found in the character of the wise King himself. Nor must we forget that the sacred flower of the East—the lotus—is a lily, and that even to name it seems to carry ineffable consolation to the Buddhist. Thus, the universal prayer of the Buddhists—that prayer which is printed on slips and fastened on cylinders which are incessantly revolving in Thibet—"Om mani padrue hum!" means simply, "Oh, the jewel in (or of) the lotus! Amen!" So Mr. Edwin Arnold, in *The Light of Asia*:

Ah, Lover! Brother! Guide! Lamp of the Law!  
I take my refuge in Thy name and Thee!  
I take my refuge in Thy Law of Good!  
I take my refuge in Thy Order! Om!  
The dew is on the lotus. Rise, Great Sun,  
And lift my leaf, and mix me with the wave.  
"Om mani padrue hum," the sunrise comes.  
The Dewdrop slips into the shining sea!

It seems that the lily, or lotus, was held sacred also in ancient Egypt, and the capitals of many of the buildings bear the form of an open lotus-flower. And naturally, in a land of Buddhism like China, the lotus occupies an important place, both in art, in poetry, and in popular fancy. It is recorded that the old Jews regarded the lily, or lotus (*Lilium candidum*), as a protection against enchantment, and it is said that Judith wore a wreath of lilies when she went to visit Holofernes, by way of counteractant charm.

The lotus which is the sacred lily of the East must not be confounded with the mysterious plant mentioned by Ulysses, and of which Tennyson has sung—the plant of oblivion and sensuousness. That there is an element of enchantment about the lily we have seen is still believed in our own country, but the association of misfortune with it is not universal. On the contrary, in some parts the leaf of the lily is supposed to have curative virtues in cases of cuts and wounds, and Gerard, the old herbalist, even says that "the flowers of lily-of-the-valley, being close stopped up in a glass, put into an ant-hill, and taken away again a month after, ye shall find a liquor in the glass. which being outwardly

applied, helpeth the gout." We confess that we have heard of no experiments having been made with this remedy. But if not to cure gout, the flower has, it appears, being used to pay rents, for Grimm says that some lands in Hesse were held upon the condition of presenting a bunch of lily-of-the-valley every year. This, of course, would not be the whole burden, and the custom had, no doubt, a religious origin and significance. The flower is often associated with the sword of justice, and both the Dominicans and the Cistercians held it in high honour. It is worth noting, too, that some traditions make the lily the favourite flower of St. Cecilia, although the popular legend makes the angel bring her a bouquet of roses every night from Paradise.

But how did the lily become the badge of France? One tradition is that it was adopted by the French kings because it was the emblem of purity, and closely associated with both Christ and Solomon. One old legend has it that after one of the great battles of the Crusaders, the French banners were found covered with lilies. According to others, the Fleur de lys is merely a corruption of Fleur de Luce, or Fleur de Louis, and was not a lily at all, but the purple iris, which Louis the Seventh adopted for his emblem on his departure to the Holy Land. On the other hand there is a legend that a shield of azure bearing the device of three golden lilies was presented by an angel to Clothilde, the wife of Clovis, and it is claimed that the lily has been the true national emblem since the time of that sovereign. Whatever the origin, however, of Fleur de lys, it certainly means lily now, and the "Lily of France" is a symbol as definite as the "Rose of England." Or as the shamrock of Ireland.

It is curious how much superstition and romance has clustered round the humble clover-leaf. Not one of us, perhaps, but, as a child, has spent hours in looking for the four-leaved clover that was to bring untold luck. What trouble to find it! What joy when found! And what little profit beyond the joy of the search! As the old couplet had it, somewhat inconsequently:

With a four-leav'd clover, double-topp'd ash, and  
green-topp'd seave,  
You may go before the queen's daughter without  
asking leave.

The advantage here is not very obvious, but the Devonshire people had a more defined idea of the virtue of the double clover, and they state it thus:

An even-leaved ash,  
And a four-leaved clover;  
You'll see your true lover  
Before the day's over.

But in Cambridgeshire it seems that the two-leaved clover is the object of desire, for there the saying goes:

A clover, a clover of two,  
Put it on your right shoe;  
The first young man you meet,  
In field, or lane, or street,  
You shall have him,  
Or one of his name.

This, while presenting a considerable amount of uncertainty in the result, at least has the merit of presaging something. In other parts, however, and in more ancient days, the carrying of the four-bladed clover was believed to bring luck in play and in business, safety on a journey, and the power of detecting evil spirits. In Germany the clover was held almost sacred whenever it had two or four blades. Now, as to luck, a curious thing is stated by the author of *The Plant Lore of Shakespeare*. He says that clover is a corruption of "clava," a club, and that to this day we preserve the emblem of luck on our playing-cards in painting the suit of clubs. Somehow the etymology here does not seem very satisfying; but at any rate we all know what "living in clover means." Yet, perhaps, everyone does not know that in rural districts the clover is looked upon as a capital barometer, the leaves becoming rough to the feel when a storm is impending. Professor Dyer, indeed, quotes a writer who says that when tempestuous weather is coming, the clover will "start and rise up as if it were afraid of an assault." It is probable that the association of good luck with the four-bladed clover arose from its fancied resemblance to the cross. Support is given to this hypothesis by the traditional origin of the shamrock as the badge of Ireland. In the account given of St. Patrick in *The Book of Days*, it is stated that once when the saint wanted to illustrate the doctrine of the Trinity to his pagan hearers, he plucked a piece of the common white clover. Now it seems that the trefoil is called "shamrakh" in Arabic, and was held sacred in Persia. And it is remarkable that Pliny says the trefoil is an antidote against the bites of snakes and scorpions. It is not by any means certain that the common clover was the original shamrock of Ireland; and even to this day many claim the title for the wood-sorrel. Still, for fifty years, at any rate, the popular belief has been that the trefoil-clover is the plant which was plucked by St. Patrick.

who drove out the snakes from Ireland, who is still her patron-saint, and whose badge is worn to this day. But how did the name come from Arabia, and what is the connection between Pliny's theory and the legend of St. Patrick's victory over the vermin? These remain among the unsolved mysteries of folk-lore.

With the emblem of Scotland—the thistle—we shall not find so many classical associations and active superstitions, but yet is it not devoid of folk-lore. Of course opinions differ as to what was or is the true Scotch thistle, but of the several varieties of thistles many beliefs are entertained. One variety—the Carline—is esteemed in some parts as a barometer, as it closes up when rain is approaching. In Tartary there is a variety which grows to such a size that it is planted for shelter on the windward side of the huts on the Steppes. This thistle is called the "Wind Witch," because, after the heat of the summer is past, the dried portions take the form of a ball, with which the spirits are supposed to make merry in the autumnal gales. The origin of the name thistle is probably Scandinavian, and associated with Thor. The plant was at any rate sacred to the Scandinavian god, and was believed by the old Vikings to receive the colour of the lightning into its blossom, which thereupon became endowed with high curative and protective virtues. If we mistake not, it was a species of thistle on Dartmoor which used to be called Thormantle, and was used in the district as a febrifuge. We have also read that in Poland some infantile disorders are supposed to be the work of mischievous spirits using thistle-seed. The Lady's Thistle, which some believe to be the true Scotch thistle, was one of the many plants associated with the Virgin. The tradition, according to Brand, is that the white spots on the leaves are due to the falling of some drops of the Holy Mother's milk, a legend we have seen to be attached also to the lily. Then the great Emperor Charlemagne's name is blended with that of the Carline Thistle, the story being that during the prevalence of an epidemic among his troops, he prayed to God for help. An angel appeared, and indicated, by firing an arrow, a plant which would allay the disease. This was the *Carlina acaulis*, which, of course, cured all the sick soldiers, and possibly may have some of the febrifuge virtues which the Dartmoor people fancied existed in some kind of thistle. Nettle-soup, as we know, is still

a familiar housewife's remedy for some childish ailments. In Germany there is said to be a superstition that sores upon horses' backs may be cured by gathering four red thistle-blossoms before daybreak, and placing them in the form of a square upon the ground with a stone in the middle. It is not easy to trace the probable origin of this belief, but many of the old herbalists mention the thistle as efficacious in cases of vertigo, headache, jaundice, and "infirmities of the gall." Says one, "It is an herb of Mars, and under the sign Aries." Therefore, "it strengthens the attractive faculty in man and clarifies the blood, because the one is ruled by Mars. The continual drinking the decoction of it helps red faces, tetters, and ringworms, because Mars causeth them. It helps the plague, sores, boils, itches, the bitings of mad dogs and venomous beasts, all which infirmities are under Mars." This same writer agrees with Dioscorides that the root of a thistle carried about "doth expel melancholy and removes all diseases connected therewith." In other words, the thistle was held to possess all the virtues now claimed for podophyllin, blue-pill, and dandelion—a universal anti-bilious agent!

But how did the thistle become the emblem of Scotland? Well, there are as many traditions on the subject as there are opinions as to which variety of the plant is the true Scotch thistle. It is impossible here to refer to all, so we may mention that although the *Carduus Marianus*, or the Blessed or Lady's Thistle—the origin of whose name we have given—is very commonly accepted, so competent an authority as the author of *Nether Lochaber* rejects both that and all other varieties in favour of the *Cnicus acaulis*, or the stemless thistle. In doing this, he founds his belief upon the following tradition: Once, during the invasion of Scotland by the Norsemen, the invaders were stealing a march in the dark upon the Scots, when one of the barefooted scouts placed his foot upon a thistle, which caused him to cry out so loudly that the Scots were aroused, and, flying to their horses, drove back the Danes with great slaughter. Now, this could not happen, says *Nether Lochaber*, with any of the tall thistles, but only with the stemless thistle, which has sharp, fine spikes, and grows close on the ground. This, at least, is as reasonable an explanation as any of the great national badge of Scotland. It but remains to add that the first mention of the thistle as a national emblem occurs

in an inventory of the jewels and other effects of James the Third, about 1467, and its first mention in poetry in a poem by Dunbar, written about 1503, to commemorate the marriage of James the Fourth with Margaret Tudor, and called *The Thrissell and the Rois*. The Order of the Thistle dates from James the Seventh of Scotland and Second of England, about 1687.

And now, as we began with the wreath of parsley, which symbolises death, let us end with the crown of orange-blossoms, which, among us, now symbolises the twofold life of the married state. Among the Greeks, the brides used to wear garlands of myrtle and roses, because both of these plants were associated with the goddess of love. In China the orange has, from time immemorial, been an emblem of good luck, and is freely used to present to friends and guests. But although the orange is said to have been first brought by the Portuguese from China in 1547, nevertheless this fruit is supposed to have been the golden apple of Juno, which grew in the Garden of Hesperides. As the golden apple was presented to the Queen of heaven upon her marriage with Jupiter, we find here a definite explanation of the meaning attached to the fruit. But, besides this, it seems that orange-blossom was used centuries ago by Saracen brides in their personal decorations on the great day of their lives. It was meant to typify fruitfulness, and it is to be noted that the orange-tree bears both fruit and blossom at the same time, and is remarkable for its productiveness. It is possible, then, that the idea of orange-blossom for bridal decoration was brought from the East by the Crusaders; but we have been unable to trace at what date the custom began to be followed in England. However introduced, and whether retained as a symbol or merely for the exquisite beauty of the flower, it will continue to hold its place in the affections of the maiden-bride, to whom it seems to sing:

Honour, riches, marriage-blessing,  
Long continuance and increasing,  
Hourly joys be still upon you,  
Juno sings her blessings on you.

## CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

### SOMERSETSHIRE.

IF we seek for the origin of Somerset as an English shire we shall discover it, not in any of its famous sites, such as Glastonbury, with its mythic and poetic history,

or Bath, with its healing waters renowned from all time, but in a little town perched on a hillside, with some broken fragments of an old castle crowning the height; the commanding point of an isolated range of hills that look over the flat and fenny basin of the River Parrot; over the once wild Sedgemoor, even to the little island among the reeds, where once, with Alfred and his few faithful thanes, the last sparks of the English national life seemed likely to be extinguished. At a later date, a Norman castle was built on the rude earth-fortress of the West Saxon kings, and at Somerton Castle King John of France passed two lonely years of captivity.

The group of hills on which Somerton is placed forms in rough outline the shape of the old Saxon war-axe, and the helve or handle of the axe is formed by a long narrow ridge known as the Polden Hills, along the crest of which runs the ancient highway to Bridgewater. At the foot of the Polden Hills is a chain of little villages, one of which, Edington, is, according to local history, the scene of Alfred's great victory over the Danes, when Guthrum and his host were driven to their camp, and eventually surrendered to give their pledges to the English King, and submit to the rite of Christian baptism. Close by, on the edge of the hatchet-blade, lies the village of Aller, where, according to tradition, the actual baptism of the Danes was effected. It must be owned that some authorities place the site of the battle at another Edington, in Wilts. But Somerset seems to have the best claim after all; the scenes of the great epic of Alfred and the Danes lie close together, and in the compass of these Somersetshire hills. Here may have stood the neatherd's cottage, where Alfred burnt the cakes; and there, behind those still clearly-cut entrenchments, may have been the site of the camp where, in harper's guise, he soothed the spirits of the wild Scandinavian chiefs with soft music, while with a soldier's eye he marked the weak points in their array.

It was probably as the summer lodge of the West Saxon chiefs that Somerton took its name, and eventually transferred it to the shire. And a pleasant fair-weather county it is, as varied and diversified as any county in England, with moors, and fens, and pleasant dairy pastures, with orchards and cornfields among hills and cliffs, and rude, romantic rocks; while its chronicles embrace every description of

legend, from those of Arthur and the Table Round to the stories current among the beaux and belles of Bath.

To begin with, there is Glastonbury, the holy island of the west, the Ynyswydrin of the Welsh, one of the three perpetual choirs of the Isle of Britain; and, as tradition affirms with some probability, the very earliest Christian settlement in the land. Even where the monkish legends about the spot are not to be received with full faith, they are themselves ancient and interesting, as showing the current belief of mediæval times.

In the year 63, according to the monks, St. Philip, who was then preaching the Word in Gaul, sent over twelve of his disciples to spread the faith in Britain; Joseph of Arimathea, himself a venerable eye-witness of the Crucifixion, being at the head of the mission. The King and people of Britain, while they received the strangers with courtesy, were not prepared to renounce their ancient faith, but they permitted the missionaries to establish themselves at Ynyswydrin, a remote and lonely spot, where they might practise their rites without interruption from the established priests of the country. Weary with their burden of years and the fatigue of their long pilgrimage, the venerable group seated themselves on a gentle eminence, from which they could see the little clearing among the woods and marshes which was to be their future home. The mount still bears the name of Weary-all Hill, and here the aged Joseph struck his staff into the ground, which eventually grew and blossomed, and became the celebrated Glastonbury Thorn, which buds and blossoms at Christmas, while other trees are bare and leafless. The thorn, alas! no longer marks the spot, but a stone records where it grew, and grafts from the sacred thorn have been struck and are still flourishing.

Soon the pilgrims built themselves a humble church framed with osiers from the marshes, and enclosed with mud and wattles, and round about this church they reared their huts, living there in pious seclusion, and there dying, one after the other, till all were gone, and the little settlement was left as a solitude in the midst of the great waste, haunted only by the wild animals of the forest.

Thus the place remained, unknown and unvisited, for about a century, when two missionaries from Rome, Phaganus and Deruvianus, landed in Britain, and converted and baptised the reigning Prince

and his people. Eventually, either miraculously directed, or guided by their new converts, the two saints found their way to Ynyswydrin, and discovered the remains of the ancient settlement, the graves of its patriarchs, and the wattled oratory. The wattled church became famous, and was visited by the great missionary saints. St. Patrick came there to pray, and St. David and the holy memories of the place were preserved even in the wreck and ruin of successive barbarian invasions.

We come upon firm historic ground when St. Dunstan appears upon the scene as abbot of Glastonbury, and converts the college, with its Celtic traditions and practices, into a Benedictine convent of the latest model; but it was not till the Normans came, probably, that the primitive church of St. Joseph was transformed into a solid structure of stone, the ruins of which are still to be seen occupying a peculiar position at the west end of the abbey church.

Glastonbury, too, is mystic Avallon, the island of apples, the burial-place of Arthur, whose remains were, as chroniclers relate, actually discovered in a search made by Henry Plantagenet, who had heard the secret of Arthur's burial from some Welsh bard. But the bones discovered were of heroic if not gigantic size, whereas, according to all tradition, Arthur was rather below than above the average stature. Thus, Guinevere rallies him, as he makes love to her in her father's hall, when he declares himself able to overcome her hero, Cai the Tall—no doubt a rival suitor:

Unless thou art more than thy appearance,  
Thou could'st not overcome Cai with a hundred  
in thy train.

While Arthur modestly replies:

Guinevere, of beauteous look,  
Deride me not; though small I seem,  
I would myself a hundred take.

In this uncertainty we may fall back on the poetic legend that Arthur did not die at all nor was buried, but lives still in fairyland, to reappear some day, in the time of Britain's utmost need.

Glastonbury has other than legendary associations. Its abbey was long one of the chief educational centres of the west. From the days of St. Dunstan it was noted as an ecclesiastical school, and brethren of the house established a colony of even greater fame for learning at Abingdon on the Thames. The last abbot, Whiting, shared the enlightened views of his patron, Cardinal Wolsey, and made of the abbey a great

school for the sons of the nobility; but, notwithstanding its public utility, the abbey shared the common fate of the great religious houses, and its abbot, refusing to surrender his trust, was hanged on the Tor Hill close by—where the noble tower of a ruined church dominates the little town—and his mangled remains were exposed here and there as a warning to other faithful servants of the Church. Not far from Glastonbury, at the foot of the Polden Hills, lies "Sharpham" Park, the birthplace of Henry Fielding, the early master, and, indeed, practically, the founder of the modern school of fiction. His hero, Tom Jones, is a Somersetshire youth, and many of Fielding's best descriptions are reminiscences of the scenes of his early days.

A few miles of railway or highway take us from Glastonbury to Wells, with its ancient cathedral, whose west front is a marvel of architectural richness—a veritable poem or legend in stone—adorned with countless niches and statues. Apostles, Popes, Hierarchs, Princes, Bishops, Martyrs, Saints—a crowd of effigies—make up a general effect of richness and beauty; and two noble towers enclose the whole in a grand and massive setting. Then there is the Bishop's Palace—his castle, rather, mounted and embattled against temporal foes, the moat supplied with water from the holy well of St. Andrew, which was, perhaps, the first and moving cause of the whole religious settlement.

We all know the pleasant story of the origin of the episcopal connection between Bath and Wells—how a certain divine of Scotch extraction, being asked by the King which of the two vacant bishoprics he would prefer, answered in Scottish and sheepish fashion, "Baath." A reply which the King understood as meaning, "Baith," and was so pleased with the embryo bishop's outspoken acquisitiveness, that he gave him both accordingly. Unfortunately for our relief in this pleasant story, the connection of Bath with Wells is as early as the reign of William Rufus, when John de Villula—a native of Tours, who is said to have amassed a fortune by the sale of potions and philtres to the crowds who resorted to the hot-springs of Bath, and who, having been ordained, rose rapidly to episcopal rank—obtained permission from Pope and King to remove the episcopal see from secluded Wells to the more frequented Bath.

Pleasantly sheltered from the north winds is Wells by the broad range of the

Mendip Hills, which stretch almost from the coast by Weston-super-Mare, the great watering-place of the Bristol Channel, to Shepton Mallet, while the great forest that once covered its slopes, a hunting-ground for Saxon and Norman kings, stretched right across the county and joined hands with ancient Selwood, and thence the chase might be followed across the wilds of Wilts even to counties beyond, and the broad Thames Valley. A lonely Roman road, pointing to Old Sarum, can plainly be traced across the hills, and every salient point shows traces of ancient barrows and encampments.

On the northern slopes of the Mendip Hills a pleasant strip of dairy country borders the banks of the river Axe, with Cheddar, noted for its cheese, lying in a secluded nook. Hereabouts the hills resemble those of Derbyshire, with rocks and narrow ravines, and rushing streams, and caverns hung with stalactites. The most favourite of the Mendip caves is Wookey Hole, not far from Wells, the haunt of the Witch of Wookey, of legendary and ballad fame.

Once upon a time there was a considerable population of metal-seekers upon these black and rugged hills, ruled by their own laws and customs, and with unlimited rights of seeking ore on any man's freehold. The severity of miners' laws against thieves and depredators is curiously illustrated by a custom which has survived to recent times. Anciently, no doubt, the thief was burnt, but in recent times it was the practice to shut him in his hut, which was covered with dried branches, and the whole set fire to, when the culprit was allowed to escape with only a singeing.

No sooner are we fairly across the Mendip, than we begin to feel the influence of the two great towns of the west; all the roads seem to lead either to Bath or Bristol, and, following the latter direction, we soon come in sight of Dundry Hill, with a fine view of the Severn estuary and the Vale of Avon. Now Bristol should, by topographical right, belong to Gloucestershire, the Avon at that point forming the natural boundary of the counties. But historically it belongs to Somerset and the West Saxon land, a frontier fortress held against the Mercians, heathens and freebooters long after their neighbours had adopted the Christian faith and a more respectable way of life. But as topographical considerations must here prevail, let Bristol be peacefully ~~added to~~

Gloucestershire, while we follow the windings of the Avon till we reach Keynsham, which took its name from Keyna, a Welsh virgin, the daughter of Brychan, Prince of Brecknock, who formed a religious settlement here, in a spot favoured by nature, but, unfortunately, haunted by legions of vipers. In answer to the prayers of the virgin Keyna, however, the vipers were all turned to stone, and the stones are in evidence to this day, in the form of ammonites, which are frequently dug out of the neighbouring quarries.

A few miles above Keynsham the Avon becomes entirely a Somersetshire stream, a result attained, no doubt, with many hard knocks in early days, when this little corner of the county may have formed the Alsace of the period, with Bath for its Strasbourg. For we are now in sight of Bath, proudly rising from the riverside in rows of stately mansions, and terraces, and crescents, clear-cut and admirable with their backgrounds of green hills.

The hot-springs of Bath have been resorted to time out of mind by people in search of health from all the country round. We may believe in King Bladud, the leper, if we choose—the outcast driven to herd with swine, who found a cure for his loathsome disorder by following the example of the swine and wallowing in the warm mud-bath that was their delight. And that takes us back to a time when Nineveh and Babylon were still mighty cities, when Rome was yet unthought of, and Nebuchadnezzar had not yet gone through experiences which have a strong resemblance to the adventures of our British King. But, even with a less robust faith, we may admit the antiquity of Bath. Here was a Roman city, *Aquæ Solis*, or *Calidæ*, as it was alternatively called—a fine provincial city, with baths and villas, with temples, and groves, and market-places; the remains of which, after thirteen centuries of havoc and decay, are still abundantly to be met with.

The Saxons again, although despising the luxurious appliances of civilisation, resorted freely enough to the hot-springs, and characteristically named the place *Akemanchester*—the camp of those afflicted with aches and pains.

In time, under Saxon rule, a nunnery rose in proximity to the healing waters, which, again, in course of time, became an abbey. But civil war and devastation ruined the abbey, so that John de Villula, already noticed in connection with Wells,

bought abbey and town from the King, and, rebuilding the former, made it the seat of his bishopric. And this John the Bishop seems to have been the real founder of Bath as a going concern, carried on from that day to the present with more or less success. Its ecclesiastical history presents no striking features departing from the general type.

As a church-city, the sympathies of Bath were, naturally enough, strongly with the King in the civil wars, and thus it was with grief and dismay that its inhabitants witnessed the occupation of their city by the Parliamentary forces under Sir William Waller. All the greater was their exultation when an engagement, fought on Lansdown Hill, that overlooks the city walls, resulted in the defeat of Waller and the triumphant entry of the Marquis of Hertford, the royal general. But the victory was saddened by the loss of Sir Bevil Granville, one of the heroes of the west, a knight whose chivalry and prowess recalled the tales of Sir Galahad or Sir Bevis. Bath remained a royal garrison for two years after that, and was eventually peaceably surrendered to the prevailing side.

The rise of Bath as a watering-place began even with the Restoration. Charles the Second visited the place with a brilliant court, and set the example of drinking the waters, which had hitherto been considered only efficacious in the outward application of warm baths. Five years later, Mr. Pepys visited the city, and on the night of his arrival records: "Stepped out with my landlord, saw the baths with people in them. . . . The town most of stone, and clean, though the streets generally narrow," and he has further experience of the baths and bathing generally on the following days, which he records at some length in his diary.

If Charles the Second made Bath famous, the gratitude of its inhabitants must have caused a pang of regret when the city gates were shut against Charles's son, the unhappy Duke of Monmouth. But the authorities declared solidly for the legitimate branch, though the city remained Jacobite in its sympathies as long as the cause lasted. Indeed, in 1715 there was some attempt at a rising in favour of the Pretender—an affair which terminated without bloodshed, its leader being reported to have been Carte, the historian having escaped through a window in full canonicals.

In the meantime, the second founder of



Bath had come into existence, in the person of Beau Nash, to whom, in spite of the man's foppery and vanity, the city is indebted as one of its chief benefactors. The hero of Bath was born at Swansea, in 1674, of respectable but not aristocratic parentage, and went from Carmarthen School to Jesus College, Oxford, without distinguishing himself as a scholar. Nash was destined for the bar, but his tastes led him to prefer the army, and it is said that he carried a pair of colours in the King's forces, although his name is not recorded in the roll of fame. Later on we find him a student of the Middle Temple, a student in name only, but devoting all his time to gaming and gallantry. Even then he must have studied the art of pleasure in a scientific spirit, and he was so noted as an organiser of entertainments, that when the Templars resolved on entertaining William the Third in a manner worthy of their ancient reputation, Nash was appointed master of the revels, and carried out his functions with great success.

Soon after this, Nash made his appearance in Bath, where there existed already the rude beginnings of a social despotism under a regularly appointed Master of the Ceremonies. But it required some courage as well as experience to fill the post, in view of the ruffianism of the bulk of the gilded youth of the period, and the fighting customs of the age. The former Master of the Ceremonies had just been killed in a duel when Nash took up the reins of power, and from that time the prosperity of the city was assured. Roads were mended; streets were paved and lighted; pleasure-grounds were laid out; evening assemblies were planned and regulated; and all kinds of ruffianism were suppressed, while rank and fashion were attracted to a centre of gaiety and pleasure, where a perpetual carnival seemed to reign. Nash must have been a great financier, for all these improvements were made without undue burdens on the citizens, and the profits of the gaming-tables furnished the civil list of the King of Bath, without the necessity of exacting contributions from his subjects. And Nash really kept a royal kind of state, driving about the city in a chariot drawn by six grey horses, and followed by a crowd of runners and footmen, as well as mounted attendants, himself in a richly-laced coat and an enormous white cocked-hat. At the same time, his culture and knowledge of the world were so complete that he won the

consideration of some of the most distinguished men of his time. Pope was his friend, and forbore to use the lash of his biting satire, and those who came to mock remained to swell the praises of the elegant arbiter of fashion.

All this could not last for ever. Nash was too profuse to accumulate, and more cunning gamblers intercepted his revenues, while other men—and, what was more important, other women—and other manners, occupied the stage. But he lived to a good old age, and, it is satisfactory to learn, not altogether neglected by those who had gained so much by his powers. The Corporation made him an allowance of ten pounds a month, and it may be hoped that he might to the last enjoy his ombre, basset, quadrille, or whist, with the veterans and dowagers who still held him in honour.

Much had changed, indeed, and the alterations in manners were probably all for the better, for which Beau Nash is deserving of a fair share of credit. What a difference, indeed, between the Mohawk of his early days and the Romeo of the New Bath Guide!

Well I know how Romeo dances,  
With what air he first advances,  
With what grace his gloves he draws on,  
Claps, and calls up Nancy Dawson.

During the past half-century, the renown of Bath as a watering-place has a good deal declined. Our English spas have been deserted for the baths of Germany, while the popularity of cold water in general, of sea-bathing, of hydropathy, has dimmed the fame of those ancient waters of the sun, whose hidden furnaces have never slackened their force while dynasties and nations have fallen and risen. But there are signs that go to show that Bath and its waters may probably come into fashion once more. The age of heroic remedies is past, and those who were accustomed to wallow naked in December's snows and are now teased by rheumatic pains, may yet one day be seen soaking luxuriously in the summer's heat of the steaming waters of Bath, and taking the air afterwards among the terraces and crescents in a Bath-chair.

Altogether modern and pleasant are the streets of Bath, where, if throngs of modish visitors are absent, there is still a general air of wealth and prosperity. There are fine vistas and magnificent distances, and you never lose sight of the beauty of the setting—of the bright river, and the green,

fertile hills, and the woodlands and hanging gardens. Even the abbey-church is as new and bright as it can consistently be, and the very monuments have an air of elegance and fashion. Then the bridges somehow give a foreign aspect to the city, especially that charming Pulteney Bridge, with the houses upon it, which recalls Venice or Florence.

But if Bath rules over the northern part of the county with undisputed sway, the capital of the south is clearly Taunton, the chief town of old-fashioned Somerset. On the way thither, along the coast, it may be as well to give a glance at some of the places of interest. There is Clevedon, among noble cliffs, as its name denotes, the church overhanging the sea like the samphire-gatherer.

There, twice a day, the Severn fills;  
The salt sea-water passes by,  
And brushes half the babbling Wye,  
And makes a silence in the hills.

Here at Myrtle Cottage, Coleridge made his home after his marriage, and hence he wrote to friend Cottle, his Mæcenas and publisher for the nonce, for brooms, and frying-pans, and such like tackle, of which his poetic nature had not comprehended the necessity. Indeed, Coleridge's only resources at that time were his unwritten poems—the bulk of them, alas! destined to remain unwritten to the end of the chapter—and Cottle's promise to pay him two guineas for every hundred lines.

From the cliffs of Clevedon the coast sinks rapidly to the flats of Weston-super-Mare, and there is no place that commands attention till we reach Bridgewater. Here the tide comes in with a vengeance, full sweep from the broad Atlantic, rising thirty or forty feet in a few hours, a state of things which makes its quay an uncomfortable berth for shipping. There was a great castle here, once upon a time, which was deemed impregnable, and which mounted forty guns in the time of the civil wars. However, Fairfax, the Black Tom of Yorkshire fame, captured it without much difficulty, and demolished it so thoroughly that only a ragment, known as the Watagate, remains upon which to hang its story. Otherwise, the town itself was a noted Puritan stronghold, and here, at a later day, Monmouth found a ready welcome and many ardent supporters. And here he remained encamped outside the town, peasants and miners thronging in to join his ranks, but the gentry holding ominously aloof, till his scouts brought word of the advance of

the King's army, even as close upon him as Sedgemoor, barely a couple of miles from his camp.

It may be doubted whether, if Monmouth had ridden into the royal camp and called upon the soldiers to join him, half the army would not have thrown up their caps for him. But Monmouth had no nerve for such a daring stroke. He called a council of war, when his officers, mistrusting their raw levies, decided on a night attack. In the darkness of night, it was urged, the miner with his pick was as good as the trained soldier with his musket. And so the attack was made, but with such inefficient preparation that the existence of a deep drain which protected the front of the royal camp was undiscovered, and, of course, no means of crossing it had been provided. The miners and peasants somehow scrambled to close quarters and fought bravely for a while, the enemy now being under arms and fully prepared for the attack, and the sun rose upon a mere rabble of brave men, to be quickly ridden over and cut down by the royal cavalry.

Then followed the cruelties of Kirke and his lambs, fresh from the barbarous warfare of Tangiers, and the bloody assize, to which both Bridgewater and Taunton furnished their full tale of victims.

The great hero of Bridgewater is Robert Blake, who was born at that town in the last year but one of the sixteenth century, and who continues the traditions of the great sea-captains of that age. Like Cromwell and many other heroes of the period, he took late in life to the game of war. He was forty-four at least when his military career began at the siege of Bristol, when he held an outlying fort for the Parliament long after the general capitulation of the town. Rupert, who was in command of the royal troops, threatened to hang him for his temerity, and would have done it but for influential friends who begged his life. After that, Blake, with Sir Robert Pye, of Farrington, took Taunton by storm from the Royalists, and was made its governor and held it against all odds. So that Blake had completed his half century before he took to the sea, following his enemy, Prince Rupert, from one port to another, and finally demolishing his squadron. Then our bold Admiral began at Van Tromp, and gave the Dutchman no rest till he had driven him from the seas. It was then that the sturdy Republican heard of Cromwell's coup d'état, and made his celebrated laconic speech to his officers:

"It is not for us to mind State affairs, but to keep foreigners from fooling us."

From Van Tromp the brave Admiral turned upon the Dey of Tunis, whose prisons were full of Christian captives, and soon he brought the proud Moslem to reason. Then he sailed against the Spaniard, demolished the forts of Santa Cruz, Trinidad, and destroyed the Spanish Plate fleet. After that he turned homewards, and lied in Plymouth Sound within sight of the hills of his native land, just fifty-eight years old, having crowded a lifetime of glory into the last eighteen years of his life.

### MY THIRTY-FIRST BIRTHDAY.

A STORY IN FIVE CHAPTERS.

#### CHAPTER I. MORNING

ALAS! it is too true! My first thought on waking is that I have attained my thirty-first year on this 15th day of June. The Abbé, when taking his leave last night, made me promise that I would write down with care every event which is to happen on this day, as marking my last of youth, and bade me rise early, that I might listen to the warning he had prepared for me on the occasion.

How will it be conveyed? By a sacred serenade, or a bouquet of churchyard flowers? Bah! Life hath still some charm, and I can still look forward to the future, in spite of my "advancing age." The Abbé is a dear old soul, but takes life sometimes rather gloomily. To be sure, I never told him last night that I had written to Cousin Octave that, as he seemed too shy to return home and come to my château without a special invitation, I sent him one in due form to say that he must come at once, and that I hoped he would leave for ever that horrid Martinique, where he had frittered away his youth, and fix himself definitively in France. I did not suggest how this was to be accomplished, but he will know the meaning of the hint. He cannot have forgotten the days when he and I had no need of words to know each other's thoughts.

I must say that my surprise was great when Maître Allard read my father's will. Never did I dream that he would have left his whole fortune at my own disposal, without the tyranny of guardians or hampering of trustees—but all to be my own, to be managed according to my own will and pleasure. The words were soothing

to my soul, for I had always considered him cold and harsh in sending poor Cousin Octave away, although providing for him handsomely in getting him appointed manager of the great estate in Martinique belonging to the company of which my father himself was director. The condition was one by which both our hearts were well-nigh broken. "Never more, upon our faith and honour, to seek to hold secret communication with each other so long as my father lived." And to think that the cruel decree was maintained until his death released me from the vow!

Ten years of life! Ah me! But time has wrought no change in my love for Octave—no alteration in the feelings of my heart. Aye, but what change has it accomplished in myself?

What says the little looking-glass that Octave bought me at the fair of Suramy, saying, as he handed me the fairing, that I should there behold the face he thought most lovely upon earth. That has not changed, at all events, and in it I behold the reflection of a face, still fair, if not, perhaps, so fresh as the one he beheld through his tears, as he looked up at me from the window of the carriage which bore him away. The complexion is somewhat faded, and here and there I can perceive a silver streak amongst the curls, which are still golden, although not quite so bright a gold as when he left. Ah well! Life is not all made up of doubt and disappointment, as the Abbé declares. We shall have many merry days yet at the Charmilles. And Octave? Well, we shall be happy together at last!

What a lovely morning! As I open my window, the lark is rising from the turf at the foot of the hill, and as the slight mist from the river clears away, I can see the villagers stirring in the village street. What are they doing? They are actually lopping off the branches of the lime-trees now in full flower! The bees are disturbed, and the air is so clear that I can see whole swarms of them flying out in alarm. What can be the meaning of this despoilment? Ha! I remember now. The Abbé told me that he would remind the villagers that this is my birthday, and although not of such solemn importance as the festival of the patron Saint, they ought to note it by some token of their gratitude for all the good I am trying to do with my newly-acquired wealth. Now they are carrying the

boughs and branches of flowers to the church. That may be perhaps the warning that the Abbé was to give me. Ah, five o'clock! the church clock strikes the hour. And the Abbé, punctual as the clock itself, is standing at the church-door. He utters in the peasants with their flowers, and scarcely has the last stroke resounded, deep, grave, and sonorous through the atmosphere, when the angelus-bell takes up the strain, and sounds clear and cheerily over the valley. I kneel down at the window and offer my prayer to the Virgin—repeating the sweet Ave Maria to which that bell summons me, by its nine strokes. But what is this? The angelus-bell has tolled its nine strokes as usual—and after a pause it begins again. The good Abbé must be forgetting the limit of his morning's task. But, no; the bell goes on tolling in steady measured rhythm until it has struck more notes than the salutation-bell itself. Yes—ten!—now ten again! When will it stop? Another ten! and now a pause at last. But stay! One single stroke louder and more prolonged than all the rest. And at last the tolling ceases in reality. I see it all! This is the Abbé's warning. 'Tis my thirty-first birthday—the last year of youth, the first of middle-age.

## CHAPTER II. NOON.

THE day begins auspiciously, everything combines to lighten the spirits and make the heart glad. The sunshine is most glorious, the meadows are in full flower, the birds are singing joyously above my head, and the grass is blooming beneath my feet as I stroll across the lawn. Mother Nature knows no change. The Charmilles will be found as beautiful as ever when all those who love the place are gone and forgotten. The dear good Abbé came to breakfast with me, according to his promise, and I unfolded to him my whole heart. I spoke of Octave warmly and with affection, as I ought to speak of the man who has proved so true and faithful to his love, as to lead a solitary life among strangers and forego the consolation of matrimony, though courted and admired in the circles to which he has been exiled, as it were, by my father's sentence. I, too, have kept my faith unbroken, and resisted all the temptations which have beset my path. It is this steadfastness of purpose which, no doubt, induced my father to alter his opinion concerning the fickle nature and frivolity of women, and to trust me with the sole ad-

ministration of the estate of the Charmilles. He was surprised that I should have refused to marry the Baron de Blignières with his numerous quarterings and magnificent hunting-stud. He was indignant when I rejected the offer of the Marquis de Mérian, who had arrived amongst us honest, simple country folk, with all the gloss and polish of his Parisian manners still upon him. But he laughed heartily when I sent the young Count de Chalais back to his mother, who had dispatched him to make love to me, although I was his senior by several years. My father was too just in principle to urge me to marry any man I did not like; he was only unjust enough to compel me to give up the only man I loved. And so, as the years flew by, he became quite resigned to my remaining in single blessedness, and fully content with the peace and comfort my presence bestowed upon his gouty old age.

I thought much of all this as I sat beneath the acacia on the lawn before the windows, waiting for the hour of high mass. My mind was teeming with doubts and fears, uncontrolled even by the certainty of the faith and honour of my dear Octave. I had expected a letter from my cousin by return of post in answer to mine, and the disappointment was great that none had arrived. But mercy on me! While I have been dreaming the time has flown, and here is eleven o'clock! The drums of the pompiers (I have just founded a fire-brigade of seven men for our village) are beating as they march to church. Come, I must rouse myself, and make all speed there also. It would not do for the heroine of the fête to be the last to enter. I will go down the hill by the path which skirts the lawn. It is shady and silent, and I shall avoid the gossips who would pester me to death with their clumsy greetings. My heart is too full to allow me to waste its overflow upon trifles. How will Octave answer my letter? Will he come at once, or will he delay? He tells the Abbé in his letters that his life has been a busy one; that he has been much tried; that he has never ceased to think of me; and that he shall have no rest until he sees the turrets of the Charmilles looming upon the horizon. Well, well, we shall see, we shall see, as the Abbé always exclaims when I endeavour to break forth in praises of Octave. Tutors seldom have faith in their pupils, and the Abbé mistrusts Octave. Like my father, he views with some little contempt the strict adherence

to the command to abstain from all attempt to communicate with me.

But I do wish I could have a letter to-day! It would be a fine testimony of his remembrance of our love that he should have remembered my birthday.

Disquietude makes me peevish. The hour for the post has gone by, and I pass through the gate into the narrow path. It is not made to engender bright thoughts—a steep and rather damp passage, between the wall of the garden on one side and a high, overshadowing bank on the other. But it is the shortest cut down to the village, and I am late. In my haste I run against a man striding with hurried step towards the château. It is Bastien, the postman, bringing letters to the household. He hands me one from his oilskin pouch. I recognise the handwriting, and my heart beats so violently, my breath comes so short and painfully, that I must have fallen had not Bastien grasped my arm. He evidently thinks I am going to faint, for he fans me with the skirt of his blue linen blouse with one hand, while he clasps the oilskin pouch firmly to his bosom with the other. The gesture is so comical that I cannot help bursting into a kind of hysterical something between laughing and crying, but when he so kindly attempts, with the sleeve of the blue linen blouse, to dry the tears running down my face, I come to myself at once, and thrusting the letter into my bosom, run quickly down the hill, and in another minute stand before the church door.

The church was already filled. The Abbé came out to meet me, and following in his steps came the Grey Sisters of the school, who look upon me with heavenly smiles of gratitude, and the children burst forth into the hymn of praise to Our Lady, "who melts the heart of the rich man to charity, the soul to pity, and the memory to recollection of the poor." To this Sister Eulalie had added a verse of her own—expressive of gratitude to me for having built the new wing to the old school-house. And I had to listen, and smile, and express my gratitude, and make answer to the pretty speech composed by the Superior, and recited by tiny Babette, the mole-catcher's daughter, who presented me with a big bouquet from the school-garden, when all the while my heart was beating with anxiety, and my pulses throbbing with impatience to ascertain the contents of the letter. The Abbé's sermon failed to

excite the smallest feeling of interest, although I could not help perceiving that it was in some degree preached at me, and, moreover, I grew slightly offended when he talked of the Wise Virgins, who set aside all human vanities. The eyes of the whole congregation were turned to me, with a loving expression that annoyed me. I thought the comparison ill-timed. At length came the Domine Salvum, the mass was over at last. The Abbé was to accompany me home, and I was to await him in the sacristy, so hither I hurried in all haste, flying from the salutations and loving greetings of the villagers to whom I had ever been so patient with my time, and so liberal with my money.

And now at last I was alone. I sat myself down upon one of the oaken chests which held the Abbé's vestments, and tore the letter from my bosom with a quick impatient gesture, and yet, when I held it in my hand, instead of opening it at once I mused upon the seal. The motto was that of our family, "Patience et Vaillance," nothing applicable to our position, and then I turned the letter over and once again read the superscription, "A Mlle. Adèle de Biencourt, au Château des Charmilles, à Bocage les Ormeaux, Seine-et-Oise." Lengthy as this address may appear I lingered over every letter, and spelt out every word, seeking remembrance of the schoolboy hand which used to fill me with such joy in former days. Who would have thought that amid this apparent calm my whole frame was quivering with anxiety and dread—and that every nerve was strained to the very utmost! At length the letter lay open in my hand. At first the writing seemed so confused and blurred that I could scarcely make out a single word. It was only by degrees that the meaning became clearly present to my mind.

The letter occupied the three pages allotted to correspondents in those days, and yet somehow it appeared as if curtailed. It was warm and loving in expression, yet in substance reticent and cold. Octave began by declaring himself overjoyed at returning to Europe, and then ran into the description of all the happiness he had enjoyed at Martinique, particularly of late. "It would have been complete," he said, "had it not been marred by the privation of my letters." This was prettily turned, but seemed like an afterthought. There was, indeed, throughout loving remembrance of former days, but always

same indescribable reticence and sudden breaking off which had struck me from the first. But as I drew near the end ample compensation was found in the announcement of his immediate return, and the hope of once more being able to talk about old times, and visit old places, towards which his heart had been yearning for ten long, weary years. And this was all that concerned our relative position. It was not till after a second perusal, more greedy, if possible, than the first, that I became conscious that not a single word of love was apparent throughout the whole epistle. Indeed, there seemed all through a sort of vacillating caution as if fearing to say too much, should he venture to say all.

There was no compensation in the latter portion of the missive, which was filled with details concerning people unknown to me, and events in which I took no interest. He told me, for instance, that his greatest friend in the island had lately died, and had left him trustee of the great estate of Les Sablons, and guardian of his only child, a daughter, to whom had been bequeathed a large fortune, while to the widow but a small annuity had been awarded. The delicate health of the daughter demanding the advice of European doctors, he felt it incumbent on him, as her guardian, to bring her with him. She would, of course, be accompanied by her mother, who watched over her with the greatest vigilance. He added that I should find both Madame de Méris and her stepdaughter most charming, and, as he was indebted to them for great kindness and attention during a long visit he had made to Les Sablons, he would take the liberty of bringing them both to Les Charmilles. He wrote hurriedly, he said, only a few hours before embarking, and would be at the dear old home as fast as tide and steam could bring the party to Biencourt. Then, as if his mind had been disburthened of all by which it had been oppressed, he launched forth in his old witty, satirical style, quoting reminiscences of all the ridiculous old fogies on whom he used to play his boyish pranks—the last page being filled with all the extinct old family jokes, which brought to mind the good old days when we were young together. Why was it that those days now seemed farther off, older than ever? Because there was evidently a strained effort on the writer's part to assume the good humour which he knew I had once regarded as the most attractive feature in his character. And

then—I knew not why or wherefore—I fell to musing on the comparative proportion of our respective ages, and for the first time felt timid. I was twenty years of age when Octave left the Charmilles—he was twenty-two. He must now be thirty-three, while I am thirty-one. The difference was nothing then; but now the world will say, perhaps, not that he is too young for me, but that I am too old for him.

Just as the thought traversed my mind the door opened, and the Abbé entered. He started on beholding the sorrowful expression of my countenance.

"Octave is coming at once!" I whispered, as I handed him the letter.

He was struck on looking at the post-mark.

"What, by the Joyeuse!" exclaimed he in astonishment; "why, I noticed last night, in reading my *Moniteur*, that the Joyeuse had arrived and landed her passengers at Nantes. If so, Octave can be here to-day."

So sudden was the emotion produced by the words, that I was scarcely conscious of what nature were the feelings they created. I could not tell whether the revulsion I experienced was that of joy or sorrow, and in a kind of stupor I rose and followed the Abbé through the park to the hall-door of the château. I was not prepared by the possibility suggested by the Abbé for the sight which awaited me. The confusion of boxes and packages, the cloaks and travelling-gear, told me at once of the arrival I had longed for with such intensity, and yet filled me with such dread now that it had really occurred. The old housekeeper was sobbing aloud at the sight of young M. Octave, and Cauvin, the aged steward, began to pace restlessly about, almost dancing with excitement at the suddenness of the event. These were the sole occupants of the château during mass, as the rest of the servants had gone to the service.

The door of the salon was ajar, and, as I stood breathless and transfixed, I could see the shadow of a woman cast by the strong sunlight upon the polished floor, as it moved hurriedly to and fro, while abrupt whisperings met my ear. The tones were those of displeasure and reproach, and were answered soothingly in the deep, subdued voice of a man, while, from the furthest corner of the room a deep sigh was breathed, as of someone weary and in distress. I stood for a moment so overcome by emotion that I dared

not enter the salon. At last the voice of the Abbé close to my ear dissolved the spell.

"Daughter, take courage," whispered he; "remember there is a time for all things."

He pushed the door wide open, and handed me into the salon.

For a moment every object seemed to turn before my sight, and it was not until an exclamation uttered in a man's voice had saluted my ear, that I recovered my senses and my sight sufficiently to recognise in the bronzed and somewhat developed features before me those of my cousin Octave. He had grown stouter—both face and figure seemed swollen, as it were; perhaps the effect of the long sea voyage, and the heat and fatigue of the journey from Nantes. His eyes appeared much smaller and his mouth much larger. He had looked at me steadfastly as I entered with trembling pace, then sliding across the polished floor, exclaimed in a somewhat hoarse tone, as of one under past rather than present emotion:

"Comment! do I behold my own dear cousin Adèle?" In his precipitation his foot had caught in the painted flower-stand in front of the window. Fortunately the flower-pots had been put out for air upon the window-sill, but the shock of the fall and the ringing noise of the metal completely upset my nerves, so that I could not utter a word of welcome, but sobbed hysterically. He must have been embarrassed, for he stooped to pick up the flower-stand before he ventured again to approach me, and then he seized my hand in his, and, raising it to his lips, kissed it in courteous though not in loverlike style, and, overcome as I was, I could not help observing that, as he did so, he looked timidly askance at the elder lady who was now standing near the window.

"Ah, my dear cousin, how long it is since we met!" said he in a low tone as he dropped my hand and turned to introduce them by name as Madame de Méris and her stepdaughter, Mdlle. Emilie. I advanced towards the ladies who had thus so unexpectedly become my guests, and welcomed them to the Charmilles with all the grace I could command. A glance at the Creole lady was sufficient to reveal to me a woman of high resolve and stern determination. She had evidently been a great beauty, but she was no longer young, and the outline of both face and form had yielded to the soft influence of the enervating climate of her country, and so had

become spread and shapeless. Her eyes were still large and very black, flashing with an expression so earnest, that I thought it almost malevolent as they rested full upon my countenance. Her dress was faultless—rich black silk covered with black lace—no travelling-costume crumpled and dirty, but fresh and crisp, and worn with all the coquettish insolence of her race—"changed at the hotel," thought I. Her hand of snowy whiteness appeared whiter still through the fall of black lace which hung over it, and every finger was decked with rings, which sparkled with dazzling brightness through the network of the black lace mantilla. She did not come forward to meet my advances, but stood firm and upright while I bowed and swept towards her with the grace imparted by the dancing-master of Beldon, from whom both Octave and I had taken lessons in our youth, and welcomed her warmly as my cousin's friend. Then I turned to Mdlle. Emilie, who, unlike the flashy, jewel-bedecked matron, stood modestly at a distance, and when she took my proffered hand she pressed it, looking all the while into my face with a beseeching expression, as if asking for my sympathy. She was a pale, delicate girl, evidently shy and embarrassed, and subdued by the glance of her stepmother, for even while she was answering my commonplace questions concerning the fatigue of her journey, I detected in the look she directed towards the lady the same expression of fear and doubt I had observed in Cousin Octave. The latter was now absorbed in busy conversation with the Abbé, and I sought in vain for some subject of mutual interest which should give animation to our discourse. I could find none. We conversed in monosyllables and in a tone so low that it was a positive relief when Josephine, my maid, came to announce that the rooms which had been hurriedly prepared for "ces dames" were ready.

My heart was full to bursting. It was not thus that I had pictured to myself the meeting for which I had woven the most poetical fancies. I knew well enough that the presence of the two ladies must be an obstacle to any kind of gushing sentiment on my cousin's part, but I had certainly expected a more frank and cordial greeting—a more open acknowledgment of our past attachment, and, perhaps, for sentimental subtle, a more free acceptance of our probable position in the future. I escorted my guests to their rooms, in accordance

with the rules of old-fashioned etiquette, and then I rushed to my own chamber and bowed my head in resignation to the sacrifice of all my dreams, and burst into a passion of tears. No one will deem it strange that, amid the perplexity into which the constraint of my cousin's behaviour had thrown me, I should have connected it with the presence of Madame de Méris and Mdlle. Emilie. It was plain to me that Octave was held in bondage by the elder lady, but the motive of this abject fear of her very glance was a mystery. Her scrutiny of me had been so keen as to be almost disquieting, and I could not but associate with disapproval the frown with which she gazed upon me. I thought that perhaps Octave might have spoken of my personal appearance with the blinded admiration of an infatuated lover, such as he had been ten years before, and that the scornful expression of her countenance was due to the disappointment she must naturally have felt at sight of my dulled eyes and faded complexion. I think I see it all. She is bent on making a match between Octave and her stepdaughter—that is why she has come to France—that is why she will not lose sight of him. Well, the girl is not pretty, but she is delicate and gentle, far more refined than her mother; she evidently comes of better blood. And then—she is young; many, many years younger than myself. Ah me!

## CHAPTER III. AFTERNOON.

THE rest of the day passed over without incident. Not for an instant could I converse with Cousin Octave alone. Madame de Méris was always beside us. She complained of fatigue, which was natural enough, and begged permission to recline upon the sofa. This did not surprise me, and I gladly encouraged the idea, which I thought would allow me to draw nearer to my cousin. So I helped her gently to the sofa and smoothed the down-pillows beneath her head, and essayed to draw the skirt of her dress over her feet. But to this she objected, and I was therefore compelled to observe the beautiful foot and elegant Spanish slipper left exposed to view. I was disappointed in my expectations, when proposed a walk with Octave, under pretence of showing Mdlle. Emilie the ank where our swing once stood, and the at-headed stump whence we used to knock down the egg or the apple with our ball,

and told him that I wanted to show how the walnut-twig he had planted had grown to a tree of goodly dimensions, and how the low hedge, which had once enclosed our playground, had become thick and impenetrable. It now encircled the hillock of turf which I had religiously kept green and smooth, for on the marble bench, hidden by the hedge, I used often to sit and muse, thinking of Octave, and sometimes weeping at the recollection of his departure.

Cousin Octave greeted the proposition with alacrity, and snatched hastily his broad straw-hat from the table. Emilie had linked her arm in mine. There was already sympathy between us. We were all three moving towards the door, when suddenly Madame de Méris, raising herself upon her elbow, looked out from among her cushions, and peremptorily begged not to be left alone. Octave could not choose but obey the hint, and in my endeavour to hide my disappointment, I could not help displaying it. Octave looked embarrassed and coloured slightly as he dropped my arm; Emilie seized it and dragged me down the steps of the vestibule on to the lawn. At that moment I think the mysterious sympathy which links soul to soul was established between us, and we were friends from that hour. We sat together, this stranger girl and I, while I was somehow attracted by her tone and manner, and fancied, so much was my heart craving for sympathy, that she almost felt the cause of my depression, for she pressed close to my side as we sat upon the stone bench, and clasped my hand in hers, twining her fingers round my own, and looking beseechingly into my face, as if imploring my pardon for some imaginary offence. "No doubt," thought I, "that of having supplanted me in my cousin's affections."

My voice was altered when I spoke—almost choked in its utterance—when I sought to pretend lightheartedness in recounting the scenes enacted by Cousin Octave and myself in that very place when he and I were boy and girl together. The interest took in my description was feigned likewise; for the smile with which she listened was fixed and meaningless, while her glance was eagerly fixed upon my countenance, as if always anxious to make some communication of far more serious import than the mere reminiscences of childhood with which I had sought to entertain her.

The sound of the dinner-bell released us



both from the awkwardness of our situation, and we returned briskly to the house, glad to be freed from the restraint we had imposed upon each other.

Madame de Méris had already disappeared to her chamber, and Octave was in such earnest conversation with the Abbé that he did not even perceive our entrance. The Abbé's countenance was singularly disturbed—its expression almost indignant as he listened to the confidential communication made to him by my cousin. The latter was evidently subdued by the Abbé's displeasure. He raised his eyes once to mine as I passed by, then turned aside his glance in confusion, making an effort to cross the room in order to open the door for our exit; but I had hurried through before the attempt could succeed. And with a burning sense of some lurking wrong—some hidden cause of complaining, I hastened to my room to compose myself and put on the mask we all have to keep concealed ready for use in the secret chamber of the heart.

The dinner passed off in the usual form. Our simple, old-fashioned fare happened to please the lady before whom we all seemed to bow already in homage to that self-assertion which none of us seemed to possess but herself. The talk was all of Martinique and its society—of the high position Madame de Méris once possessed there, and of the great influence the heiress of the Sablons would have it in her power to exert over the aristocracy of the island. "Decidedly she is aiming at securing Octave for Mdlle. Emilie," said I to myself; "but Mdlle. Emilie herself does not seem at all moved by the same idea." The poor girl sat looking dreamily on, evidently without taking the smallest interest in the conversation, but always gazing at me with the same imploring expression I had noticed before. "She will never consent to marry Octave," thought I again; "she is but seventeen—he is thirty-three. She will, no doubt, think him far too old."

#### CHAPTER IV. EVENING.

THE day drew near to its close. The evening was lovely after the great heat of the afternoon. Twilight, soft and balmy, with the thousand odours of the flower-garden ascending from the earth, and the ruddy glow of the sunset still lingering in the heavens, tempted us all to wander out towards the terrace, whence the view of the village and the church, lying close beneath the wall, was considered one of

the great attractions of the place. The terrace was planted with two long rows of closely-cropped hazel, cut in double arches, such as may be seen in many an old-fashioned garden belonging to the royal châteaux of France. People are thus enabled to walk up one alley, and return by the other, without the monotony of confinement of the eye to the same view. Our archway is particularly fine, and had given its name to the château. The thick screen of hazel is not divided in the middle, and so forms a close compact hedge, along which people may walk unperceived by the promenaders in the alley on the other side. The outward screen is cut into regular archways, through which the glorious and animated view of the little river and the wooden bridge, with the houses and gardens, the church and the Grande Place, are alternately perceptible, while, on the other side, the peace and quiet of the park, the Charmilles, with its rare old forest trees, its sparkling fountains, and grey old statues, is seen in charming and delightful contrast.

But the darkness beneath the covered archway was distasteful to Mdlle. Emilie, and she remained looking over the terrace towards the village to watch the moon rise above the village spire. I felt myself compelled to remain with her, as Madame de Méris, weak and delicate as she claimed to be, preferred to walk, with the help afforded by Cousin Octave's stout arm, in order to take another stroll beneath the tunnel. I, myself, was too restless to share Mdlle. Emilie's enjoyment of sitting on the low stone wall of the terrace to inhale the fresh evening breeze, and so walked leisurely to the end of the archway, musing on the events of the day, and wondering what was to follow. My heart was growing cold, methought—benumbed by the chill which had gone over it since the morning. I had lost, as it were, the very power of reflection, as the twilight emblem of the gradual darkening of my bright hopes, was gathering around me. As I turned to retrace my steps towards the spot where Mdlle. Emilie still remained seated on the wall, wrapt in thought, the voice of the Creole lady and that of my cousin Octave met my ear. The one was striking, from its Creole peculiarity, and yet penetrating; the other, trembling and uncertain. Heaven will forgive me for not having hurried my footsteps to stop listening, but the fear of being overheard by the talkers arrested my return.

"I can bear this no longer. Deception of this kind suits neither my position nor the name I bear, and if you will not speak to-night, I promise you that Mdlle. de Biencourt shall hear the whole truth from me to-morrow."

"But I have charged the Abbé with my message," replied Octave in a trembling tone. "He will tell my cousin of our position, and—and— Ah, if you only knew what the avowal cost me!" and he coughed, as though the very remembrance of his embarrassment were choking him as he spoke.

"You can judge, then, what a longer silence will cost me!" retorted Madame de Méris sharply. "You promised me that our engagement should be avowed at once, and that I should be received as your affianced wife, and share your cousinship with the rich old maid of the Charmilles."

"My dear Florinda," exclaimed Octave in a tone of the deepest alarm, "subdue your voice; you will be heard by—"

"And what if I am?" exclaimed the lady abruptly. "You should rejoice that what you please to call your 'secret' should be known, without the pain you seem to feel at having to publish it yourself."

I heard no more. My senses must have deserted me at that moment, for, when Mdlle. Emilie came running towards me, exclaiming that the dew was falling so fast that she felt quite chilled, I flung myself upon her bosom, and kissed her so tenderly, and hugged her so fondly, and burst into such a fit of sobbing, and dragged her with such force towards the château, that the poor girl was quite alarmed. I could see by the light of the lamp burning in the hall that she was deathly pale. The words she whispered in my ear will never be forgotten. She had heard the altercation beneath the tunnel as well as myself.

"Do not be frightened, Mdlle. Adèle," whispered she. "Such a little quarrel as this is nothing at all. You should hear them when they have real high words together. I sometimes tremble to think of what will be their life when they are married."

I almost shrieked aloud as she pronounced the fatal word, and, bursting from her without uttering a syllable, hurried to my own chamber and locked myself in. I heard her speed up the staircase after me, and feared that she might think I needed her assistance; but she turned back with an exclamation of astonishment, and descended slowly to the hall.

I was not long in recovering the con-

sciousness of my being, of my mission in this world, of the dignity of my position, and of all I owed to my father's memory as well as to myself. The Abbé's lessons came back to my soul at the right season, and, after a few moments' quiet self-commune, I raised my head once more, and remembered all this with thanks to Providence for having put an end to my delusive hopes while there was yet time. But one pang remained—a small and petty wound inflicted on my feminine sense of justice, as it were. I had been prepared for Cousin Octave's want of faith; I had accepted my age as its excuse, with the conviction that it was to Mdlle. Emilie that his unstable love had been transferred. But even this consolation was denied me. To the love of his early youth, whose freshness and beauty had faded while trusting through long years to his faith, to the daughter of the man who had taken him to his heart and helped him into life and independence, he had preferred a woman much older than himself, whose imperious beauty was marred, not merely by the lines of departed youth, but by those of vulgar arrogance and evil temper.

Again did I take up Cousin Octave's little looking-glass, and was pleased with the comparison on viewing the reflection of my visage there. The disturbance of soul I had so lately undergone had left no trace, save that a deeper shade of sadness was visible in the expression of the eyes; but no peevishness nor irritation, and not the slightest sign of envy or malice was to be beheld. As I restored the little mirror to its place upon the toilet-table, a large ill-folded letter, addressed to "My dear Adèle," in the large, ill-fashioned writing of the Abbé, met my gaze. A slight return of weakness was perceptible to myself in the trembling of my hand and the catching of my breath as I opened it—deliberately, however, and without dread. The communication was short and pithy:

"DAUGHTER, canst thou bear up under disappointment? I have much to tell thee. Be alone to-morrow, betimes, in the library. There will I await thee. Remember. Be firm, and place thy trust and confidence where alone thou canst not be betrayed."

I mused but for a moment over the message, then changed my dress, throwing aside the flowered muslin with its lace trimmings and gay ribbons which I had worn at dinner-time, and resumed

my suit of sober grey, and by this time I had changed my mood likewise, and resumed my calm demeanour. Madame de Méris was still under the influence of the irritation with which she had rebuked Cousin Octave's attempts at soothing her temper. Octave himself was silent and depressed, and Mlle. Emilie looked perplexed and bewildered at my restored tranquillity. The supper passed off in conversation furnished by the Abbé and myself, and kept up with our usual gaiety and good-humour, airy and independent as though we had no other aim than that of inspiring the same gaiety and good-humour in our guests. As we parted for the night I observed a disposition to melting tenderness in Octave's voice. Trembling with emotion, he was about to whisper some word intended for my ear alone, when the Abbé approached, and taking my hand before Octave could raise it to his lips as he was about to do, he said gently, as he placed his own hand upon my head in token of benediction: "Forget not tomorrow in the library. I have that to say which can be listened to nowhere else so well." I raised my eyes and met his gaze openly, without curiosity and without fear.

"Dear father," I said, "I know all that you would say. No need to sound the charge to combat, the victory is already won."

To his look of astonishment I answered with a smile of the deepest reverence and love, and withdrew ere yet the amazement caused by my words had passed away.

#### CHAPTER V. NIGHT.

THE day has been long and eventful, but the night has come at last. Amid its silence and repose I can commune with my own heart. All is well, and I am pleased to find that the agitation of my soul has given place to calm, and ill-will towards my neighbours to resignation. I do not hurry to bed, for I have much to set right in my own mind—to readjust, in short, the sentiments which, having been so violently displaced, were becoming mixed and confused in my brain. I do not need a light, for the moon is shining brightly, and everything looks so calm and quiet that the fever and heat of my frame seem gradually to have ceased, and I feel refreshed even with the sight of the peace around me. But one single taper is shining throughout the village.

Its light comes from the casement of the poor old widow Martin, who is dying of sorrow and fatigue after a life of labour and anxiety to bring up her two boys. One of them, taken by the conscription, has been lately killed in Algeria, while the other, as eldest son left in mercy by the law as sole support of his mother, died a month ago, from an accident, in Paris, whither he had gone to earn sufficient wages to make her old age comfortable. I have been able to supply her with all that is needful, and she dies in peace, forgiving the fellow-workman whose negligence caused poor Michel to fall from the scaffolding, as well as the captain by whose rash command her darling Basil was compelled to march with his comrades to certain death in the ambush formed by the Arabs.

And so do I, too, retire to rest, forgiving all, and invoking Heaven's blessing even upon those by whom my soul has been stricken almost unto death.

This paper I found among the writings left by my dear Abbé. I had given it to him, according to my promise, on my thirty-first birthday. How far off it all seems now—a glimpse into another world! I am very old now, but not solitary. Emilie, restored to comparative health by my unceasing care, and unwilling to marry, resides with me, and together we do good, after the fashion of unmarried women, and find our reward in the happiness of others. The world smiled at the subjection to which Cousin Octave was condemned by his union with Madame de Méris; but we would often sigh at the prospect of his debasement. They returned to Martinique, where Octave died still young—worried into his grave (so people said) by the temper of his wife. That lady's irritability has been increased by the terms of Octave's will, whereby he left me sole guardian of the only child born of the marriage with Madame de Méris, the reasons given for this step being anything but complimentary to the mother. So my interest in life is likely to increase rather than diminish, as it draws towards its close.

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# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

## CHARLES DICKENS

No. 872. NEW SERIES. SATURDAY, AUGUST 15, 1885. PRICE TWOPENCE.

### ONLY A BUSINESS MAN.

By MAY DRYDEN.

#### CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE three girls waiting at the Holme heard the noise of the Pardborough party returning past the gate. They listened until the tumult died away, and then began to watch for the home-coming of their men-folk, straining their ears to catch the first sound of their steps on the gravel.

From the upper windows they could see that the fire in the Hollow was already dying down, and drew the just conclusion that the mills had escaped this time.

They opened the front door, and let the light from the hall-fire shine out into the night, whilst they hung about the door-steps with anxious, pale faces, peering out into the darkness. Then they wandered thence to the study, where Clarence had superintended the laying out of an ample and dainty meal, adding first one comfort and then another to their preparations.

They said very little to each other, only now and again uttering vain conjectures as to what might be detaining their brothers. When, at last, they heard the click of the garden-gate, they realised from their relief how intense the strain of waiting had been.

Clarence ran down the steps to meet them, and then, as she saw Gordon lying in Luke's arms, staggered back and almost fell.

"Luke—Luke!" she cried, "is he hurt?"

Luke's heart beat fast as he answered, calling her by her name as she had called him by his for the first time:

"Not seriously, Clarence," adding as he deposited his burden in a big armchair in

generally knocked up than seriously hurt, I hope. Are you not, old fellow?"

"Yes," answered Gordon. "Don't be frightened, Clarence. The doctor has patched up this hole in my forehead, and I shall soon be all right."

But, in spite of his assertion, Clarence was alarmed. She did not like to see her brother so excited. Mark, too, whispered to her that the doctor had said he was to be got to bed at once. She took command of the situation immediately.

"Mr. Carfield," said she to Luke, "there is a fire in my brother's room; will you help him up, please? Mark wants to go to bed, too, don't you, Mark? We will hear all about it in the morning."

"Directly, Clarence—directly," said Gordon irritably; then: "I thought Phoebe was with you. Where is she?"

Phoebe stepped forward and stood by his chair.

"Phoebe," said he, "I want you to go to Deborah. Do you understand?"

"Now? To-night? Is she hurt then?"

"Yes; she saved my life, they tell me. I wish they had not told me, Phoebe. But there is only Minnie there, such a silly child, and her mother cannot know. Go to her, and——"

His speech failed him, his head fell back on the chair again. He had fainted, which was probably the best thing that could have happened to him.

Luke lifted him again in his arms and carried him up to his bed, and then undressed him and laid him in it as tenderly as a mother would her little child. Indeed, the pity and affection which brought the tears to the strong man's eyes as he hung over the frail and wasted form were akin to what Gordon's mother might have felt for him. The strongest, and best, and

of the woman's nature mingling with their sterner qualities. Luke was so big and strong himself, that all his protective instincts were called forth by weakness and suffering.

Gordon opened his eyes as Luke laid his head on his pillow, and looked at him with a somewhat puzzled but very contented expression. Luke smoothed the bed-clothes about him, and spoke to him quietly:

"You will go to sleep now, will you not? There is nothing to be done or thought of to-night."

"No, not to-night—to-morrow."

"You will rest, then? You can if you will, you know. Go to sleep."

"Yes."

Gordon smiled, turned his head on the pillow, and fell asleep like a tired child before he had time to do more than feel grateful for being ruled by this calm, commanding nature. Luke left the room quietly, and outside the door met Clarence. He stopped her, standing right in front of her, and taking both her hands with a firm grasp into his.

"No need to go in, dear," said he: "he is asleep."

"Asleep!" Clarence raised her eyes to his with a thankful look.

"How did you manage that?"

"I told him to go to sleep, and he went."

"Do people always do as you bid them, Mr. Carfield?" said Clarence, moving a little back and trying to disengage her hands. For answer he gathered them both into his right hand and laid his left on her shoulder, looking straight into her eyes, and compelling an answering gaze.

"Not always, but generally, Clarence," said he. "My child, will you do as I tell you?"

"How can I help it?"

"Do you want to help it?"

"No."

"Then, Clarence, be my wife."

She made no answer, and he drew her close to him, and kissed her once or twice. Then she turned quickly, caught his hand, and pressed it to her lips, and, breaking from him, ran away, leaving him standing lost in wonder at his own happiness.

Presently, however, he gave himself a shake, and went slowly downstairs, trying to remember where he was, and, in spite of love, strongly reminded by his bodily sensations of the lateness of the hour and the exertions he had lately made.

In the study he found Clarence kneeling on the floor with her arms round Phoebe, and saw at once that the latter understood what had passed. Clarence sprang up as he entered the room.

"Good-night," said she. "Good-night and good-bye. No," as he approached her, "you shall not say another word to me to-night. I will be obeyed sometimes."

She embraced Phoebe warmly, and then turned and ran away, leaving the sleepy and bewildered servants to let the brother and sister out.

"By the way," said Luke, stopping in the drive, and drawing his hand across his eyes, "was not Matty there? We must go back for her, little woman."

"Do you think I would have left her! She is all right, dear. Dick took her home half an hour ago."

"Oh! Ah yes. A nice lad that—a very nice lad. Why, where are you going, Phoebe?"

"Down to Deborah's cottage, Luke. You know he told me to go."

"Not to-night, my dear. You are tired and worn out. Come home to-night; you shall go to-morrow."

"To-morrow there may be no need."

"Phoebe, she is not dying. She will recover. You must come home, my dear little sister."

"I will not!" There was a sharp ring of pain in her voice—a tone as though she had been tried almost more than she could bear.

Luke looked at her in astonishment. He hardly recognised the usually submissive Phoebe. She was astonished by her own vehemence.

"Oh, I beg your pardon!" cried she. "But, Luke, I must go. Don't hinder me, dear. I do as you say almost always, you know. Let me have my way to-night. He told me to go. I could not bear it if he thought I would not do what he wanted."

"Why, Phoebe, my little sister," said Luke, putting his arm around her, "of course you shall go. Don't tremble so, dear; I would not stop you from doing anything you wanted to do so much. Leave off all to-night, my darling."

Phoebe clung to him, trembling, and trying to check the sobs that rose in her throat.

"Come now," he went on; "you must command yourself, you know, or you will be of no use."

"Yes," she said, making a great effort and speaking quietly.

Then, as they walked on, she spoke again:

"It will not be for long, Luke, I am sure. Mrs. Leighton is a more capable woman than Mr. Fenchurch knows. I would not mind, only it may be the last time he will ask me to do anything for him. Next week he will perhaps have no right to want me to do anything."

Luke made no answer, he had already more to think of than he could manage. In a few minutes they reached Isaac's cottage, and he bade his sister good-night, and stood to see her enter, then turned and walked homewards.

To his astonishment he found the front-door open, and entering, discovered Matty crying in her favourite place, the kitchen. She did not see him, so he retired, and locked up, and, coming back, found her standing waiting for him, defiant.

"I'm glad you've come," said she; "I am quite tired of sitting up for you."

"Matty, I'm very stupid to-night, I dare say; but why were you crying?"

"I was not crying."

"Oh! Well, can you tell me whether I am mad or whether everybody else is? Upon my word I don't know."

"Both," said Matty. "And you are more than half asleep too. So good-night!"

"Just one thing more, Matty. How came Dick to leave the front-door open?"

"How should I know? Dick is like most men—a great goose. I can't be responsible for anything he says or does."

Matty made her escape, and went to bed, and Luke followed her example. He really was half asleep, but it did not need a wide-awake man to perceive that Dick had made a venture that night, and failed, and that Matty was not altogether contented with his failure.

"Never mind," said he to himself sleepily, as he tumbled into bed. "They can put it right another time. But poor little Phoebe!"

#### CHAPTER XXIX.

A WEEK later, the mills in the Hollow were at work again, and all was quiet in Wilton. Only the blackened heap of ruins which marked the spot where the reading-room and library had once stood told the tale of the disturbances of the week before. Fenchurch's hands passed by the pile of broken bricks and charred wood without looking at it; they were

ashamed of their misbehaviour, and did not want to be constantly reminded of it.

Gordon Fenchurch was at his work again, coming a little later to the mill and leaving a little earlier, but otherwise transacting his business as usual. He had made no allusion whatever in the mill to the riot, maintaining, moreover, always his gentle, kindly courtesy of demeanour towards his hands, so that they began to think he intended to pass over the most serious outbreak that had occurred under his rule, and, though relieved, did not quite know what to make of it.

They were mistaken. Gordon had no intention of condoning such an offence against law and order, nor of making light of it. He was merely waiting until he should somewhat have regained his strength, and have also freed his mind from certain private troubles that weighed upon it very heavily. He was, if possible, thinner and more worn-looking than before, and his forehead was still plastered where the stone had cut it.

In their secret hearts, Gordon's hands had always liked him, and now, in the reaction from their wrongdoing, he might have ruled them with a rod of iron, and not a murmur would have been heard. They followed his slender form with their eyes lovingly as he came and went amongst them, and many a rough fellow choked a sob with an oath as he watched the patient sadness of his master's pale face, and swore vehemently that he would never vex "th' lad" again.

Amongst the weavers three were absent. Old Ben Crossley, whose petty, spiteful nature would not let him forget that he had injured his master, or go back to his work, hung about all day long at the street-corners and in the public-houses, "playing him"—in other words, drinking, smoking, and watching for an opportunity to let fall some spiteful speech about Gordon, whom he hated for Tom Brent's sake. Odd as it may seem, the old man really loved the handsome youth, even while half despising himself for loving anybody. Anxiety on his account lent new venom to a tongue always prone to evil-speaking, for Long Tom was in prison, waiting for his trial at the next assizes.

Tom and Deborah were the other absentees.

Deborah was rapidly recovering from the effects of Tom's shot, which, fortunately for him, were not, after all, very serious. During the one night through

which Phoebe had watched at her bedside with Mrs. Leighton, the poor girl had been very ill, and suffered much; but she had not, even then, been in danger. Now, thanks to a splendid constitution, though very feeble she was able to sit up and watch with languid interest her mother's movements as she busied herself about the house. Her mother, poor woman, was very unhappy.

Phoebe had been to see Deborah day by day, and Clarence had carried down to the Hellow many a basketful of dainties to tempt the invalid's appetite. Both had been, as Mrs. Leighton assured them, welcome as the sunshine; and, indeed, if the simile little suited Phoebe, it was, just now, peculiarly appropriate to Clarence, whose brightness was dimmed only by the sight of her brother's trouble, and who banished that from her mind as far as possible when visiting Deborah, wisely considering that any hint of it would hardly be conducive to her friend's recovery.

This was all very well for the Leightons, but on the Saturday following the riot they had a visitor, by no means so welcome, in Mrs. Watkins, who came in the character of Christian missionary to open the eyes of her working fellow-sister to her daughter's sin. That was the word she used. Speaking of the scene to her daughter afterwards, she said:

"Really, my dear, the woman was so obtuse, I was forced to say out precisely what I meant, which was most unpleasant."

She began by asking whether it were true that Deborah had saved her master's life. Mrs. Leighton answered proudly enough:

"So they tell me. Aw' wasna' theer mysel'."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Watkins. "It is very sad."

"Nay, aw' conna see that," said Mrs. Leighton. "Eawr Debby's mending noicely neaw and Measter Fenchurch is abeawt again, aw' hear, and th' lads ull all be woiser next toime."

"My good woman, is Deborah's soul mending? Is she in a state of repentance?"

Mrs. Leighton turned on her visitor fiercely:

"What han yo' to do wi' th' lass's soul? And what fur should she repent?"

"Every Christian woman has to do with the soul of every sinner."

"What?" Mrs. Leighton stared in

astonishment, and then actually laughed as she replied: "Yo're mista'en, ma'am. Eawr Debby's as good a lass as ever wore a piece. She's known fur it."

"Then what is all this talk I hear of her and Mr. Gordon Fenchurch?"

"My lass and Mr. Fenchurch!" Mrs. Leighton's face flamed with wrath and then turned white. She opened the house-door and stood holding it. "Ma'am," said she, "aw'm sorry fur yo' that yo'n nowt better to do eur to go round takin' th' character fro' a lass as is pure and good as I doubt yo're own daughter is no better. What! eawr Deborah, ut never had a selfish thowt nor did an ill-deed i' her loife—not even when she wur a babby or a little lass, to be talked o'! An' wi' Measter Fenchurch, as is a gentleman i' word an' deed! Good-day to yo', ma'am."

There was nothing left to Mrs. Watkins but to retire, so she retired accordingly. I think it highly probable she said much more than is set down in this narrative, but Mrs. Leighton, from whom I heard of the matter, mentioned it to me only once, and that but briefly.

The working fellow-sister, having successfully routed her enemy, sat down and cried, with her face buried in her apron.

That night she and her husband talked the matter over, keeping all knowledge of it carefully from Deborah.

Isaac was bound to confess that, though he knew that there was absolutely no foundation for the scandal, this was by no means the first time he had heard it.

"We mun' tak' th' lass away, owd woman," said he sadly. "It's noan fair to Measter Fenchurch to let her bide heer. It's very hard on a lad like that, tryin' his best to be upright i' th' soight o' God an' man, to ha' sich a talk as thian abeawt him."

"Tha talks as though he wur th' ony sufferer," said Mrs. Leighton indignantly. "Dost care nowt fur eawr poor lass measter?"

"Thou knows aw do," said her husband gently. "We tak' good care o' her. E' th' lad's a good lad, and he has a father."

So they agreed to go away as soon as Deborah should be well enough to move, and Mrs. Leighton was fretting terribly about it.

Meantime, Mrs. Watkins had taken care that, through her husband, Gordon should be made to understand of what he was accused.

"There must be something in it," said Mr. Watkins to his wife. "The fellow turned as white as a sheet when I mentioned the girl's name."

The disgraceful rumour did not take Gordon by surprise. He knew enough of human nature in general, and of Mrs. Watkins in particular, to have expected it from the minute he was told that Deborah had saved his life. He knew that his name and hers would inevitably be linked together, and that some person would be sure to comment ill-naturedly on the fact. He more than suspected old Ben of being the originator of the scandal, as, in point of fact, he was; but of him he took no notice. He had made up his mind what he must do, even though the doing of it should kill him, and he now resolved to wait no longer.

Going home from the mill on Saturday at noon, he passed a group of men, amongst them Ben Crossley, who, raising his voice as Gordon approached, said:

"Who! don't he wed th' lass then? She'd be a farrantty bargain fur ony mon, an' she worships th' very ground he treads on. More shame for him."

That afternoon Gordon went up to Mr. Carfield's house, and asked to see Phoebe alone, who presently came to him in the garden with a very white and sorrowful face. It cut him to the heart to see her looking so, and to know that he had, however unwittingly, wrought her trouble. But he dared not give himself time for consideration.

"Phoebe," he said gravely, "I want your help and advice."

She answered very steadily:

"You shall have it."

"Have you heard anything of the rumour that has got about in Wilton?"

She flushed scarlet, and nodded, without looking at him.

"Phoebe, do you believe it?"

She looked at him now, full in the face, standing still opposite to him on the garden-walk.

"Do you think I should be here if I believed that? I know it is a lie!"

She put her little ungloved hand into his, and he held it reverently for a moment. Their eyes met, and their souls too, for in that instant every veil was dropped from between them. Each read the other clearly, and there was no further need of explanation.

Gordon broke the spell, turning away, and leaning, with his forehead on his arm, against a great tree that stood close by.

Phoebe almost lost sight of her own pain in seeing his.

"Gordon," said she, touching his arm gently, "you must be brave, you know. What do you want my advice for?"

He straightened himself up again, and spoke:

"Do you believe she loves me, Phoebe?"

"Yes, I believe she does—with her whole heart."

"And they are taking away her good name on my account! Oh, Phoebe—Phoebe! Heaven help us, for men are very demons!"

"Gordon, do not despair. Dear Gordon, be brave for both of us. I cannot be brave much longer; and this is the worst, you know. After this nothing will seem so hard."

"I am a coward!" cried he. "My darling, it nearly kills me to see your sweet, pale face and not be able to comfort you. It is awful! We cannot help ourselves at all; we have no choice! Why should we care for right and wrong, since this is what comes of it?"

"We do care. We are made so. We cannot alter that!"

"No, we cannot alter it, but it is very cruel. Phoebe, do you think Heaven would let us suffer so?"

"I do not know. Everybody suffers. Do not let us think about that. It does not matter now, you know. It is better than if we had had to choose. I am glad we have no choice."

"I wish I could help you! I wish I could comfort you!"

"You do help me. You do comfort me. All my life long I shall take comfort in having known you, and in knowing how good and true you are. And now, we must say good-bye."

"Do you bid me go, Phoebe? I will not go unless you do. You have the right to bid me go or stay. I cannot sacrifice you."

"I bid you go; there is no other way, is there?"

"There is no other way."

"I make the sacrifice for myself. It is not you who sacrifice me. Do not trouble on my account. You have always been good to me."

"Good-bye, then."

"Good-bye."

Gordon turned and walked away, and Phoebe stood still and looked after him, feeling that now, indeed, life had nothing more to give her or to take away from her.



## A QUIET CORNER OF NORFOLK.

IMAGINE a quaint old town, hardly large enough to be dignified by the name, as if transplanted from the heart of Normandy to find refuge in a secluded valley rich in foliage and terminating on one side in breezy cliffs diving sheer down to the seashore, which boasts "yellow sands" spacious enough for all the gambols of Ariel and the fairy crew, and which forms the strand of an expanse of ocean fine as any to be found on the eastern coast of England. Imagine as the dominant object in the landscape an old church-tower—whose "passing bell" is still heard as occasion requires—a tower lifting its head high above all other things of brick and mortar, and forming the western extremity of an ancient and noble fane. Imagine a seaside resort without marine terraces, or parades, or a pier, or itinerant Christy Minstrels, or most of the so-called attractions of those towns which court popularity and patronage on the strength of such questionable credentials. Imagine a place where Nature acts the part of principal hostess, and bids you come and breathe her health-giving breezes, and wander in the midst of her beautiful handiwork, finding rare treasures for eye and mind, and taking in many previously undiscovered charms of field, and flower, and country-place. Imagine these things, and you have Cromer.

The apparently prosaic and eminently anti-Ruskin agency of a railway has been brought into skilful harmony with the spirit of the surroundings, and the visitor who arrives for the first time at the little Norfolk town is impressed with the view which opens before him as soon as he steps outside the station. In this respect Cromer resembles Ilfracombe; both towns are favourably seen immediately on arrival, from stations prettily perched some distance away upon well-placed eminences.

It is a walk of three-quarters of a mile from the station into Cromer, along a dusty road, and by many a well-kept country residence. On the outskirts of the town a large new red-brick house stands out in bleak and treeless grounds, which has been built as the seaside abode of Mr. Frederick Locker, and where it is expected the Poet-Laureate will sometimes come. Near at hand is the house where dwelt Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, the colleague of Wilberforce, and scattered about in close proximity are houses of men with famous names

in the banking annals of this country, who have made Cromer their seaside dwelling, and the land about Cromer principally their possession.

Most quaint and curious is the town when entered, with streets so narrow that pavements are almost unknown, and the great lumbering omnibuses, which ply to and from the station, find it difficult to pass any other vehicle abreast unless squeezed against the walls of the houses forming the narrow old streets. It is sad to note that the first public building one sees in Cromer is the police-station, for this old-world town, in spite of its tinge of mediævalism, and the honesty and well-doing of its fisher-folk, must needs possess a guardian of the public peace; whose life, however, if appearances are worth anything, must be as uneventful and tranquil as that of the most orderly and inoffensive of Her Majesty's lieges over whom he is called to exercise the salutary influence of his presence.

From the police-station to the church it is but a stone's-throw, and then Cromer's stateliest monument stands confessed. The building—a fine example of the perpendicular style—is in good preservation, with the exception of the chancel, which is in ruins. It was restored not many years ago, principally through the liberality of several of the resident landowners. Mr. Walter Rye, in his brochure on *The Churches of St. Peter of Shipden and of St. Peter and St. Paul of Cromer*, states that, in 1681, the chancel of the latter church was so dilapidated that it would have cost one thousand pounds to rebuild it, according to the story of the Rev. Thomas Gill, Rector of Ingworth, and lessee of the great tithes under the Bishop of Ely, whose duty it therefore was to see that the church was kept in repair. On the 30th of November, 1681, the Bishop of Norwich consented to Gill's request to pull the chancel down, and the end of the work is said to have been hastened by gunpowder. Mr. Rye expresses the pious wish that the reverend gentleman who brought about the explosion had been seated at the time in a position to feel its full effects—a wish doubtless common to all who share in the abhorrence of wanton and wicked destruction of beautiful things. The church has undergone many other vicissitudes in the course of its existence, not the least of which was its desecration into barracks by Cromwell's soldiers, according to some accounts. The vicar is a note

worthy instance of fixity of tenure, having, as curate and vicar, officiated at Cromer for forty years.

Around the church and its ruined chancel cluster the principal thoroughfares of the quiet little town, and from it they radiate in narrow and inconsequential length in various directions, many of them gravitating eventually towards the sea. No rude traffic disturbs their rest, save when a visitor arrives, and is driven from the station; their perpetual repose is almost unbroken by noisy and ear-piercing street-cries. Occasionally they are made hideous by the strains of German bandsmen, who have found out the town, much to the town's disadvantage. But their natural quiet prevails, in the end, over such unwelcome shocks, and they retain the abiding characteristic of Cromer, the abode of peace. On the sea front, which forms the boundary of so many of them, one fails to find rows of trim terraces, or any of the distinguishing features of the orthodox English seaside town. The sea-front consists of the East and West Cliff, and on the latter is built a row of houses, as ugly as the mind—or want of mind—of an architect could conceive. These cliffs form the culminating point of attraction at Cromer, and from the elevated promenade they afford, one may look upon a limitless expanse of waters, over which, owing to the geographical position of the town, both the rising and the setting of the sun can be seen. East or west, as far as the eye can reach, are sands, which afford miles of firm and agreeable walking at low tide. At every step taken on this unconventional parade, or along the breezy cliffs, or by the sandy shore, the ozone which imparts health and vigour is inhaled without stint. Indeed, there are few places where the strong, sweet air, so necessary to vigorous health, is breathed in greater fulness, and it is not surprising to learn that, in this favoured region, the inhabitants are long-lived, and that sickness flourishes not.

Below the upper promenade is another, reached by descending a "gangway," as the zigzag, railed pathway is called, not only by the natives, but also on the official notice-boards issued by the Cromer Local Commissioners. Thus, too, is the jetty approached, an unpretending wooden structure, whereon a band occasionally plays. The people will tell you, with a touch of pride, that the conductor is the only stranger—he comes from Norwich—and that the rest of the band is composed

of residents in the town. Its musical performances are—well, perhaps not first-rate; but as visitors are not hypercritical, they come out to enjoy the evening air and to patrol the jetty in larger numbers, it must be said, on those evenings when the band plays, on the principle, probably, that "half a loaf is better than none," and that such a break in the general quiet of one's existence at Cromer is to be welcomed.

Unlike more artificial places, the evening is the fashionable hour, on week days, for the jetty promenade. In the morning people swarm over the sands in every direction. These sands are very conducive to laziness, although many resist the alluring temptation, preferring the pleasant routine of bathing, or possibly a sail, or a sea-fishing expedition, or some equally daring deed. When the tide is low, these same fine sands make excellent courts for tennis, in the absence of better substitutes, so far non-existent, in spite of the many eligible fields around the town. From morn till noon the beach may be black with people, but visit it an hour later and it is quite deserted, and continues comparatively so for the remainder of the day. It is difficult to imagine where visitors dispose of themselves during the afternoon, except about the cliffs and their adjacent uplands, and on the many walks and drives in which the neighbourhood of Cromer abounds. They leave the sands in the possession of a few nursemaids and children, and a contingent of fishermen, which is never absent from the beach at any time of the day.

The fishermen of Cromer are a hardy race, spending the summer in their native town, and, when the North Sea fishing comes on later in the year, the younger of them leave to take their part in that toilsome harvest of the sea. They are honest and manly folk, too, little addicted to the vices of drinking and swearing. Time was—in the days before Cromer became so accessible—when their natural independence of manner might have offended a stranger who did not understand it. Now they have settled down into ways savouring more of close contact with those above them in wealth and station. But, though less brusque and independent than of yore, they are not less honest or more grasping, as a chat with that fine old representative of their class, William Maize, who acts as skipper of one of the large sailing pleasure-boats, will prove. He shares the pride of all his comrades in the skilful seamanship

which is their boast. And on that wild and treacherous coast, where the surf in winter breaks upon the shore with fearful force, all the mariner's skill is too often required to avert disaster, or to save life, or to bring the fisherman safe to port after the pursuit of his perilous calling is done. Cromer, without fishermen, would be like London without fogs—wanting in one, if not the chief, of its characteristics. Their intelligent conversation is a source of pleasure to many a visitor; their good nature, their readiness to oblige, the moderation of their charges for services rendered, are virtues pleasant to find and very pleasant to bear witness to.

The history of Cromer is not without interest. In distant times it is supposed to have formed the hamlet of the town of Shipden—conjectured by Mr. Rye to have been a large and prosperous port, possessing much wealth and many opulent merchants—which then stood on the cliff above the sea. It became submerged in the reign of Henry the Fourth, on the subsidence of the cliff, and the remains, known as the Church Rock, are pointed out at low tide at a distance of a few hundred yards from the shore. The land-springs which undermine the cliffs about Cromer, together with the incursions of the sea, lead many to suppose that the present town is doomed, in course of time, to share the fate of its predecessor. With the sea encroaching at the assumed rate of a yard a year, the consequences implied are dire, and, although Cromer is now protected by a strong sea-wall, people will tell you that the storms of winter cause seas to break which shake to their foundation the houses built along the edge of the cliff. Landlips have been frequent—some of great magnitude, such as that some years ago, which occurred in the night and carried away the old disused lighthouse, whose perilous position for a long time previous had caused the Trinity Board to erect another farther inland, in anticipation of the catastrophe which eventually took place.

Around the present lighthouse is one of the favourite resorts of Cromer, where, on Sunday afternoons, both visitors and townspeople flock, either to roam on the breezy uplands or to rest among the bracken, which affords the younger folks silent and sequestered vantage-ground for the telling of the "old, old story," and their elders a convenient refuge, perchance, for a quiet nap. Most pleasant and beautiful is the view which the rising ground

invites on every side. And when you have fully taken in the various features of the landscape, and rested yourself a while, you can, over green and grateful turf, continue your walk along the cliffs to Overstrand, a most primitive fishing-village of one narrow street, whose ruined church, overgrown with ivy, is passed on the right some distance from the cliff and close to the high-road. In this church lie the remains of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, the colleague of Wilberforce before referred to. Proceeding farther east, Sidestrand, Trimmingham, and Mundesley may successively be reached; the latter a small but popular seaside village, much visited in summer. From Mundesley may be seen the ruins of Bromholm Abbey, which once had the reputation of possessing a piece of the real cross, and was resorted to in consequence by pilgrims from all parts of England.

West of Cromer lies Sherringham, with its ancient church and rood-loft; the latter the only one in the neighbourhood, according to popular tradition, which the iconoclasm of Cromwell's soldiers spared. The drive or walk along the coast leads past the crumbling ruins of Beeston Abbey. No more beautiful drive about Cromer can be taken than that through Sherringham Park, open at all times, and glorious in spring with rhododendrons, and by the Holt road to the Beacon, or Roman Camp, the favourite natural "lion" of the neighbourhood. The views here are exquisite and far-reaching, and the growth of vegetation—bracken chiefly—marvellously luxuriant and of great beauty. In returning from the Roman Camp to Cromer, there are several ways open. One rejoins the coast-road at Beeston, another follows the main Holt road into the town—a very wooded and lovely route—another leaves the main road at its junction with the "Lion's Mouth," an avenue dense with overhanging trees, but why called the "Lion's Mouth" it is difficult to say. By proceeding this way, Felbrigg Park can be visited. The property formerly belonged to the Windhams, but was brought to the hammer owing to the improvidence of the last owner, the "Mad Windham" who drove the coach between Norwich and Cromer in the days before the railway was made. The motto along the front of the house—*Gloria Deo in Excelsis*—reads strangely enough when the life of the last Windham is remembered, a man surrounded with friends while his wealth lasted, but who, when adversity came, was

deserted by most of them, and died in comparative obscurity and poverty.

Besides Felbrigg there are many historic mansions about Cromer. Eleven miles away, Blickling Hall is situated, a handsome Elizabethan house, the birthplace of Anne Boleyn, who is said to have been wooed there by Henry the Eighth. An oak statue of the unfortunate Queen stands on the right of the principal staircase, and underneath it are the words, "Hic nata Anna Boleyn." Wollerton and Mannington Halls, two seats of the Earl of Orford, are in the immediate neighbourhood of Blickling, the latter a fine old place, built in the reign of Elizabeth, and in good preservation. In returning to Cromer the village of Gresham can be passed through, where Sir Thomas Gresham, the founder of the Royal Exchange, occasionally resided. This "Merchant Royal" of "good Queen Bess's glorious days," was born at the adjoining town of Holt. Gunton, the seat of Lord Suffield, with its extensive park, is distant five or six miles from Cromer; and a short distance by rail from Gunton is Wroxham, with its pretty river and most seductive broad, on which a day of perfect enjoyment may often be spent, and where a slight foretaste can be experienced of the pleasures to be derived from a month's holiday passed in yachting among the inland lakes or broads which form the natural watershed of Norfolk.

It would be vain to attempt to enumerate all that may be seen and done in the quiet corner of Norfolk of which Cromer forms the centre. To lovers of Nature, to those who wish to gain vigour and strength, to those who can dispense with orthodox seaside towns and be content with primitive surroundings, a more suitable refuge than Cromer will scarcely be found. And the enduring wish of all such will be that modern improvements, accompanied by the goblin of the speculative builder, will long continue to keep at a respectful distance, and that one of the few genuinely primitive seaside resorts of England will not be changed so as to descend to the respectable mediocrity of a conventional marine watering-place. Cromer, with its simple ways, its early hours, and its curious old Norman similitude, is, like Clovelly, one of the unique places on the English coast. Cromer "modernised" and "improved," would no longer possess the distinctive features which give to it at present a quaint and beautiful charm, and an abiding and sure attraction.

## POTS AND PANS, AND CUPS AND SAUCERS.

WHEREVER he has clay, man makes pots. The art is as widely spread as the making of bone needles and flint knives. If there are none in the South Sea Islands, it is because there is there no earth fit for the purpose. Many tribes much more savage than the Tahitians or Samoans turn out very decent urns, of which an enormous number has come down to us; for primitive man has always had a trick of burying his most precious things along with his dead kinsfolk; and, before the potter's wheel was known, a jar, eighteen inches high, of graceful shape, with broad, overlapping rim, and zigzag ornaments made by pressing a rush-plait cord into the damp clay, was a precious thing. Try to make one, and then you will think more of those which have been found in Darley and the other Derbyshire dales, in barrows on Cornish moors and Yorkshire wolds, in pits on Scotch and Irish hill-sides. Yet they were probably made while the funeral pyre was being built—made (thinks Mr. Llewellyn Jewitt) by women's hands, so delicate must have been the touch, and so small were the fingers of which the impress is occasionally left. Then, having been baked as well as might be in the fire which was consuming the body, they were filled with the ashes of the dead, and placed, mouth downwards, in the centre of the cairn that was raised over the burning-place. Some of them are very beautiful; and they have the same general character all over France as well as in our islands, showing that "the Celt" was a born potter. Perhaps the Irish examples are the most elaborately ornamented, because native art went on there long after it had, in Gaul and Britain, been superseded by Roman processes. In France and Ireland, too, there is not only the sepulchral pottery, but that which is found in the crannoges (lake-dwellings). Some of this crannoge-pottery we should take to be post-Christian, but that no Christian symbols are found on any of the things discovered along with it. Not a few of the vessels have been hand-polished after baking—nay, if the finds in the lake-dwellings at Annecy and Bourget are as old as the French archaeologists suppose, the pre-Roman potters in Gaul had some means (probably with an ore of lead) of glazing their work. Samples of all these are to be found in art museums—South Kensington, and the Jermyn Street

Museum of Practical Geology, for instance—such museums being “picture-books for the art-student,” if only he will read, and not idly turn over the pages. There, too, we find the Roman ware in all its forms—the “Samian” (sealing-wax red), really made at Arretium (Arezzo), in Etruria, and the Romano-German, Romano-Gallic, and Romano-British. In Britain the Roman had three notable potteries—at Upchurch, in the Kentish marshes; at Castor (the name implies a “castrum”—fortified camp), near Fotheringhay in Northamptonshire; and at Panshard and a whole group of places in the New Forest. The very kilns are sometimes found (a perfect one was laid open in St. Paul’s Churchyard in 1677, when the foundations of the new cathedral were being dug); and adepts can explain how some of these early potters used “smother-furnaces,” and therefore turned out black-ware.

The Saxons (English we ought to call them) were decidedly below the Britons in artistic taste. They brought their own style—a rough imitation of the Roman—with them, many of the urns found in their burying-places being the counterparts of those dug up at Selzen, near Mainz, and elsewhere in Allemannic land; and the British potters would, of course, fall in with the fashion of their conquerors even in the work they did for the still remaining Britons. Thus in the Faussett Collection is an urn inscribed in Latin to Laelia Rufina, clearly a Roman Briton; but it is of thoroughly East Anglian type, and was found in an Anglo-Saxon burial-ground at North Elmham, in Norfolk.

During the Middle Ages, pottery, like most other arts, was slowly recovering the decay which had set in with the German invasions. However, since Christians gave up burying things with their dead, we know very little about what was being made. Pots and pans will break, and so it is that of Norman and Plantagenet ware—with the sole exception of costrils or pilgrims’ bottles, and tiles for church floors, of which latter almost every great monastery had its own factory, and some of which do not yield in glaze or workmanship to the best samples of Minton or Copeland—we have far fewer remains than of British and Romano-British work. It is the same on the Continent; most of our knowledge of the pottery of these times comes from illuminations. It is pretty certain, too, that metal, wood, and leather (black jacks) were much more largely used than clay.

They would better stand the moving from castle to castle, which was necessary in order that the nobles might eke out their incomes.

It is indeed astonishing how little pottery is certainly known to have been made in England till Charles the First’s time. A good many “grey beards” (called Bellarmines, after the obnoxious Cardinal, and “mugs” because of the human face which is figured on them) are probably English, and belong to James the First’s reign; but most of the so-called Elizabethan stoneware jugs are probably Flemish.

Even abroad the art of pottery was late in reviving. All the arts of life had sunk under the invasion of the German barbarians; and this, like several others, owes its new life to the Moors. It had never died out in the East. In Babylon are found bricks glazed with some silicate of lead and soda, a turquoise colour being given by copper, a white by tin, a yellow by antimony, a brown by iron. In old Egypt false turquoises were made by coating gravel stones with soda and copper. The same kind of glazes have been used in Sind from time immemorial, and it was probably in Persia that the Arabs learnt the art, which they very soon carried across to Spain.

The conquest of Majorca by the Pisans in 1115 marks a new departure in pottery. In their booty they no doubt brought back specimens, the Italian imitations of which were called majolica, a corruption of the name of the island. Gradually, too, as the less civilised Spaniards conquered the Moors, and also annexed the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, Moorish potters settled in Italy, and in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the manufacture flourished at Pesaro and elsewhere. The glaze was still lead and soda, chiefly without other admixture, and therefore transparent, “slips” of fine white clay being laid on to carry gilding and bright colours.

Tin-glaze—which makes a white enamel—was known in very early times (I said the Babylonian bricks show traces of it). The Moorish refugees appear to have brought it into Italy; but its extensive use is due to Luca della Robbia, who began life as a goldsmith, and then tried sculpture, in which work he grew so popular that he gave up marble for the easier material, clay. It was the need of an enamel to make his clay weather-proof, which led him to experiment

with tin, the result being the Della Robbia ware, in which South Kensington is so rich. Della Robbia belongs to the beginning of the fifteenth century. It was nearly a hundred years later before the French got saturated with Italian art. Charles the Eighth, Francis the First, and Henry the Second, all had a good deal to do with Italy; the last, by his marriage with Catherine de' Medici, bringing the two countries very close together. Lead-glazed work—tiles, goblets, cups and covers, etc.—had been going on at Beauvais, Rouen, and elsewhere; but now the potter began to call himself "emailleur de terre," and Italian influence guided the French along two lines—one leading to the jewel-like Limoges enamels, the other to ware like those called Oiron and Palissy. For in pottery, more even than in other arts, the leaps which progress has made have been mainly due to individuals. In Italy the impulse was given by Della Robbia; in France, the famous Henri Deux ware was the work of Dame Helen of Hangest, widow of Gouffier, Grand Master of France under Francis the First. The work was done at her castle of Oiron, near Thouars, she not only superintending but drawing many of the designs, her helpers being her librarian, Bernart, and Charpentier, a skilful potter. Hers were presentation pieces—there are several at South Kensington—but at her death, in 1537, she made over to Bernart and Charpentier the fee-simple of the house and orchard where the kiln and factory were situated.

Everybody knows about Palissy—glass-maker, land-surveyor, geologist—who owed very little to Italy, for it was the sight of a beautiful cup that led him "to struggle with his own thoughts, groping in the dark," till, after fifteen years of worry, laughed at by his neighbours at Saintes, scolded by his wife, hunted by creditors, accused of coining base money, he at last hit upon an enamel so pure, so brilliant, and deep in tone, that in no workshop could he ever have learned the secret. It has never been equalled since, and even for him it was a single effort; his later work, after he got mixed up with religious politics—he was a strong Huguenot, and was only saved at the Massacre of St. Bartholomew by the Queen-Mother's special interference—is decidedly inferior. His specialty was "rustic dishes," fish swimming round an islet, on which a snake is coiled, while the border is alive with frogs, lizards, and little insects ("petits

bestions," he called them) on oak-leaves. They seem out of place on a dish that is meant not to lie flat but to stand against a sideboard; but the execution is so wonderful that one does not think of the incongruity. Poor Palissy died, aged eighty, in the Bastille; but for his one surviving patron, the Duke of Mayenne, who stopped proceedings but could not get him released, he might have swelled the list of French Protestant martyrs.

While Palissy, in Paris, was lecturing on geology, proselytising, as far as he dared, and making rustic grottoes for Catherine at the Tuileries, Gambino was brought to Nevers by Louis of Gonzaga, who, by marriage, had become duke of that place. Gambino was a native of Faenza, and he at once started, at Nevers, the pottery coated with white tin-enamel (*faïence*) to which his old Bolognese town has given its name. Nevers were gradually deteriorated, passing from so-called Chinese work to coarse pieces covered with unsightly daubs. A vast deal was made there, and, being carried in boats up and down the Loire, was spread over all France, and even exported to England. The best French *faïence*, however, was that of Rouen, where the tin-enamel was introduced about 1640, and of which a beautiful red is the chief glory. What gave a great impulse to this Rouen ware was, paradoxically enough, the extreme poverty of the country in the latter part of Louis the Fourteenth's reign. To continuous wars were added successive famines and inundations of the Loire. A few courtiers gave their plate to the King and bought *faïence*. The King sent his gold plate to the mint; and then *faïence* at once became fashionable. It was killed out by Staffordshire ware, which was cheaper, neater, and more resisting, though certainly less artistic. The difference is, the French things were works of art, painted by hand; the English were done by the merely mechanical process of stencilling. Besides these there is the well-known Moustiers ware—the founder of which, Pierre Clérissy, was ennobled by Louis the Fifteenth; and a whole group of little manufactories on the German border, called by the general name of Strasburg. These are what answer in France to our earthenware, from the early attempts at Wrotham in Kent, and at Newcastle-under-Lyme, down to the works of Wedgwood and his imitators. Here again we find so much due to some one man: Toft and Simpson, in Staffordshire; Dwight,

at Fulham; and Elers, at Burslem. The earliest known date of Wrotham ware is 1640. Dwight, an M.A. of Christ Church, Oxford, got a patent in 1671 for "the mystery of transparent earthenware, commonly known as porcelaine or china"—which he almost succeeded in making—"and of stoneware, vulgarly called Cologne ware." Elers and his brother, sons of a burgomaster of Amsterdam, came over with William the Third, and, besides bringing the salt-glaze into Staffordshire, made a fine light stoneware, the red of which Wedgwood could never rival. The story that the salt-glaze was discovered by a woman, who was cooking some pork in a pipkin—the brine boiled over and glazed the side of the vessel, which had become red-hot—is, like many other stories, apocryphal.

The Elerses were not popular at Burslem; they had all kinds of devices to keep people from finding out their art-secrets, employing an idiot to turn the thrower's wheel, and the stupidest workmen they could get to do the other tasks. These they locked up while at work and searched them before they went off the premises. Nevertheless, before long, all their processes were discovered, and in disgust they gave up Staffordshire and came to Lambeth. Their idiot had turned out a sham; he was one Astbury, who feigned idiocy in order to learn how their work was done. Astbury made improvements and got patents; and then Shawe improved on Astbury, took out fresh patents, and came down so sharply on the rest of the Burslem workers that all joined to defend one of their number, against whom he had brought a suit. The suit was tried at Stafford, in 1736, and the local record of the result is as follows: "Sed th' judge to th' mesters, 'Gooa whomm, potters, an' mak' wot scourts o' pots yoa loiken.' An' when they coomn to Boslem, aw th' bells i' th' tahn wurn ringin' loike hey-go-mad, aw th' dey." Astbury ware is of wafer-like thinness, of grey, drab, or dull white, and so hard that it can barely be scratched with quartz; the salt-glaze, in fact, is quite vitrified. It is a good prelude to the cream-coloured queen's ware of Josiah Wedgwood, which is still as popular as when he first made it in 1750. The Wedgwoods were hereditary potters. A jug by one of them, dated 1691, is preserved in the Jermyn Street Museum. Josiah's weakness was his lack of originality, which led him to give in to the classical tastes of the day. He called his

works Etruria, and got Flaxman to make his designs. One of his jasper (black and white) vases, with Flaxman's apotheosis of Homer on it, lately brought seven hundred guineas; a blue and white jasper tablet, twenty-six inches by eleven, the largest known, was sold five years ago for four hundred and fifteen pounds. Under Wedgwood, busts and statuettes became a Staffordshire specialty. Some of these are very comic; the "Vicar and Moses," the former asleep in the upper desk, the latter carrying on the service in the desk below; and the "Parson and Clerk," staggering, arm-in-arm, with lantern and bottle, after a drunken bout, belong to an age when people laughed at the Church, but did not try to disestablish it.

So much for earthenware, which got its misapplied name of delft because the Dutch, being the only Europeans admitted to any trade with Japan, largely imported Oriental china, and tried at Delft to imitate it. They failed to do so; but their best work shows, in the fine blue of the colouring and the peculiar bluish-white of the ground, a good deal of Oriental character. The word delft should properly be confined to this particular kind of earthenware, but it is not.

Real china was first made in Europe by Böttcher, potter to Augustus the Second, Elector of Saxony. It had been known long before, even in England. "Some Oriental China bowls" were given to the high sheriff of Dorset, in 1506, by Philip of Austria, when he was driven into Weymouth by stress of weather. In 1587 Lord Burleigh and his son gave their queen "a porringer of white, and a cup of green porcelayn." All sorts of stories were told about its nature and composition. True porcelain was supposed to be a test of poison, and was said to be made of egg-shells, and shells of marine locusts beaten small, and buried for a hundred years. Lord Bacon, credulous as usual, speaks of it as "a kind of plaster buried in the earth, and by length of time congealed and glazed into that fine substance." In Italy it had been imitated ever since the beginning of the sixteenth century. Venice, Ferrara, Florence, all claim the invention, and in 1695 it was made at St. Cloud; but all these are the soft porcelain—*pâte tendre*—made chiefly of pipe-clay and ground flint. The hard kind—*pâte dure*—of china-clay (kaolin) and felspar, was made by Böttcher just three years before Father d'Entrecolles, head of the

French Jesuits in China, sent home the secret to Father Orry, who soon founded the famous Sèvres works. Böttcher's discovery was made in the midst of wars. He was experimenting, when, in 1706, Charles the Twelfth invaded Saxony. So Augustus sent him and three workmen, under an escort of dragoons, to the Königstein, one of those curious rocks which rise, like huge masses of masonry, out of the plain of the Elbe. There he worked on, having to act as warder over his men, whose love for art did not reconcile them to imprisonment. At last, in 1708, he pulled a teapot out of his furnace, and, handing it to Augustus, begged him to plunge it in cold water. It stood the test, and from that moment Dresden china—really made at Meissen, near Dresden—became a hard fact. Runaway workmen carried Böttcher's secret to other parts of Germany; he himself was a Berlin apothecary's assistant, who had run away to escape a prosecution for alchemy. First the Vienna factory—afterwards taken in hand by Maria Theresa—was started by a runaway from Meissen. Then Ringler, a Vienna man, went to Höchst, near Maintz, and, for safety, always carried all his recipes in his pocket. His fellow-workmen, however, made him drunk and stole his papers, and were ready thenceforth to sell the mystery, just as some German Universities used to sell their degrees, for a small consideration. In France the first attempt at porcelain—porcellana, a shell used in enamel manufacture; or, say some, the common cowrie used in the East for money by the Venetian traders who first brought china ware to Europe—was made by Louis Potera, Sieur de St. Estienne, at Rouen. His was *pâte tendre*, as was also that of St. Cloud, of which Martin Lister, physician to the Duke of Portland, said, in 1698: "I confess I could not distinguish between the pots made there and the finest china I ever saw." For a long time Chicanneau, the maker, had royal highnesses, lords, ambassadors, and a crowd of amateurs daily at his works. Its glory died with him; and when a discontented workman burnt down the place, in 1773, nobody cared to rebuild it.

The Sèvres work was first established at Vincennes. At the outset it was all soft paste, which will not bear great heat, and which you can scratch the enamel with a knife, whereas that of the kaolin-china is hard as glass. Here, again, to one man is due the perfecting of the art, *l'acquer*, who was the Sèvres chemist

from about 1750, hunted right and left for kaolin. The Germans would not let it be exported; the French, having little trade, could not bring it in from China—as we did to the Chelsea works—as ship ballast. Some beds were discovered near Alençon, but the porcelain made from them turned out grey and coarse. At last a poor country surgeon's wife, named Darnet, found the splendid beds at St. Yvrieux, near Limoges, and thenceforward Sèvres was able to compete on equal terms with Dresden. Take care if you are buying "Sèvres" not to be duped in this way: Thousands of pieces, plain or marked with a gilt monogram, are painted elsewhere, and sold as real Sèvres. Hold the piece slantwise to the light, and under the painting you will see the original monogram. Remember, too, that painted pieces are invariably marked "*décoré à Sèvres*" in addition to the mark. Otherwise the piece may be Sèvres, as the seller asserts it to be, and yet the painting may have been done in Staffordshire.

Our first English china was made at Chelsea, probably by one of Dwight's workmen carrying out his master's process. Both here and at Bow—which began very soon after, about 1740—Chinese clay was used till the Celestials stopped the supplies. George the Second encouraged the Chelsea works, paying one thousand two hundred pounds for a dinner and tea service, which he sent to the Duke of Mecklenburgh. In 1769, under one Spremont, it all came to a sudden end, the plant being bought by Duesbury, the owner of the Derby works, who also bought Bow and other London works. Wages had ranged from eight shillings and ninepence to one shilling and sixpence a day, the chief painter getting five shillings and threepence. Spremont—who made his fortune—made a good effort to keep out Dresden china, the importation of which, "for private use," at a tariff of eightpence per pound weight, was so abused as to injure the English trade.

Meanwhile at Lowestoft china had been made—and very good it is, with the Tudor rose as its mark. Browne, a Lowestoft man, was so determined to get at the secret, that he went to Bow, and bribed some of the workpeople, who hid him in a hogshead close by the furnace, through the bunghole of which he watched the owner steal in after the premises were clear, and mix his chemicals. It was Squire Lusson, of Gunton Hall, who started the Lowestoft



works. He must have been a brave man, for he had to fetch his clay all the way from West Cornwall, and his coal from Durham. His partner, Browne, was only paying out the Londoners in kind; for some London workmen whom Luson brought down, were tampered with by the London makers, and spoiled his bakings time after time.

Plymouth china, again, is an instance of one man's work. William Cookworthy, son of a Quaker weaver, born in 1705, was apprenticed to a London chemist, his widowed mother being so poor that the boy had to walk all the way from Devonshire up to town. By-and-by he set up as wholesale chemist in North Street, Plymouth. It has often been told how he, in 1748, met a Quaker from Virginia, who, having read in Du Halde all about kaolin and felspar, had found over there a boundless store of both. He showed some samples of Virginian-made porcelain, "equal," thought Cookworthy, "to the Asiatic." This Virginian china-maker disappeared like a wraith; but Cookworthy found plenty of both the needful minerals in various parts of Cornwall, notably at Boconnoc, the estate of Pitt, Lord Camelford. He tried them, and made a china "as white in body as that of Dresden—far whiter, that is, than the Chinese." His earlier specimens, proud as he was of them, were no great success; most of them were cracked, and clumsy, and unevenly glazed; and before long he engaged a Sèvres man, Saqui, to whom, along with Bone, the Plymouth enameller, are due the beautiful birds and flowers which mark the later Plymouth ware. The works did not pay, though the kaolin was to be had so near, and in 1774 Cookworthy sold them to Champion, of Bristol, and gave his mind to other experiments; helping Smeaton with his lighthouse; receiving Sir Joseph Banks, and Dr. Solander, and Omai the Tahitian, whom Captain Cook brought home on his first voyage; and trying hard to perfect a plan for distilling sea-water for use on shipboard. At first Champion had a hard struggle. Wedgwood—a man of very petty jealousies—writes in 1778: "Poor Champion is quite demolished. He had neither professional knowledge, nor sufficient capital, nor scarce any real acquaintance with the materials he was working upon. I suppose we might buy some of his growan stone and clay upon easy terms." Champion, however, was not at once demolished; he was taken up by

Joseph Fry, grandfather of "Fry's Chocolate"; but at last he sold his patent to a Staffordshire Company, himself being made by Burke a Deputy Paymaster General of the Forces!

Worcester, "the faithful city," owes its china to Dr. Wall, of Merton College, Oxford, painter as well as chemist, who founded a china company in his native place in 1751; and Worcester china has always ranked high, not only for excellence of body, but for the beauty of the painting. There are plenty more little English porcelain centres, Liverpool among them, and Nottingham.

But these are enough to help anyone who wants to be able to take an intelligent interest in an Art Museum. He ought, after reading this, to know the difference between porcelain and pottery—though Chinese pottery is very porcelain in the density of its paste. Nothing but study, however, can teach one the different transitional products between the two, depending for their character on the different ingredients—the silicates of alumina being manifold—the degrees of heat, etc. Do not forget, too, that artistic character is quite distinct from beauty of material. Doulton ware, for instance—with which we may class Deck's work at Paris—is only coarse pottery, terra-cotta; yet no two pieces are alike, the designs not being printed, but each worked out separately by hand; they are, therefore, far more artistic than many a highly gilt and gorgeously coloured sample of real china.

#### MY COTTAGE.

My cottage stands upon a gentle hill,

Where, daisy-studded, slopes a velvet lawn.

And, at its foot, dances a laughing rill,

Singing its welcome to the summer dawn;

Singing its vesper-hymn, as in the west,

Over my lordly neighbour's wooded park.

The royal sun sinks slowly to the west,

And the stars throb and dazzle through the dark.

Over my cottage, in a tangle rich,

Roses, and jessamine, and clematis

Climb, filling jealous every little niche,

Flinging sweet blossoms to the breezes' kiss:

And all the day the wild birds, winter fed,

Warble, and trill, and gurgle 'mid the trees.

While the brave skylark, lost in blue o'erhead,

Pours waves of music o'er the sunny leas.

Inside my cottage, memory holds her sway

In pictures, speaking of the loved and lost:

In books, the faithful friends of every day:

In trifles, love-appraised at countless cost:

And, flinging Time a gay defiance, Song

Murmurs, "The spirit flags, the fire grows

Yet, since both heart and hand have served—

long,

Your cottage claims my glamour, as of old.

## FRANK BUCKLAND.

It is not surprising that Mr. Bompas's *Life of Frank Buckland*\* should have been one of the most popular books of the season. The biographer had to tell the story of a singularly interesting career—a story which necessarily involved the relation of many amusing anecdotes, and he has told it very pleasantly and chattily and with a judicious absence of any of that patronage, either of his subject or of his readers, which is one of the besetting and most fatal sins of modern biographers. Indeed, the book is as amusing and interesting as one of Buckland's own, and has but one fault—although that is, it is true, a serious one. It has fairly elaborate chapter headings, but no index. Now a biography without a good index is like a strange country without signposts, like London without a Post Office Directory, like an ocean without a compass. Possibly it is too late to remedy the defect, now that the book has run through so many editions, but a defect it is, and a grievous one.

Francis Trevelyan Buckland, the son of the something more than eccentric Dean of Westminster, was bred for a naturalist, if ever any man was devoted by inherited tastes and early training to any pursuit. From his earliest childhood at Oxford, where he was born at the time that his father was Canon of Christ Church, he was familiarised with fossils, and stuffed creatures, and live pets. Before he was five years old he confounded a clergyman, who had travelled all the way from Devonshire to Oxford to bring Dr. Buckland some "very curious fossils," by describing them without hesitation, and quite correctly, as the vertebrae of an ichthyosaurus. Three or four years later, a live turtle was sent down from London for a great banquet at Christ Church, and Dr. Buckland treated it to a swim in the ornamental water in the "Quad," what time Master Frankie stood on the creature's back to enjoy a ride, afterwards taking an early lesson in operative surgery by assisting the cook to cut off its head. The same year, he was highly delighted with the skeleton of a whale at Cheltenham, noting special points in connection with its anatomy with a clearness of insight quite remarkable in so young a child. His home at Christ Church abounded in snakes and green frogs, guinea-pigs,

foxes, rabbits, tortoises, toads, and such like small deer, while even the pony was free of the dining-room, into which he could find his own way with the greatest ease. Then, on summer afternoons, the doctor would frequently drive his family about the beautiful environs of Oxford to hunt for moles and nests, fossils and wild flowers, and so at home and abroad, and day by day, the boy's love of Nature, which was inherited from his mother as well as from his father, grew until it became the absorbing passion of his life. To this he brought steady perseverance in observation and study. "Nothing like determination and perseverance," he said in after-life, and this, which was indeed the keynote to his character, was struck at a very early age. In 1830—he was born in 1826—his mother wrote of him: "His great excellence is in his disposition, and apparently very strong reasoning powers, and a most tenacious memory as to facts. He is always asking questions, and never forgets the answers he receives, if they are such as he can comprehend. If there is anything he cannot understand, or any word, he won't go on till it has been explained to him. He is always wanting to see everything made, or to know how it is done; there is no end to his questions, and he is never happy unless he sees the relations between cause and effect." This was just the temperament required in a practical naturalist, and this was an accurate description of Frank Buckland up to the last.

At Winchester College, to which the boy was sent when he was twelve years old, the natural history studies went on at a great pace, and soon assumed a very practical form, but one which, one would think, must have been occasionally found inconvenient by Master Frank's schoolmates and masters. At digging for field-mice, at rat-hunting, cat-wiring, and surreptitious trout-catching—the boy at this time was undoubtedly an ardent and successful poacher—he soon became an adept. His genius in these matters was speedily recognised by his fellows, and his love of live pets—snakes, mice, guinea-pigs, owls, buzzards, magpies, and hedgehogs—would, no doubt, have helped to make him popular in any society of boys; but the passion for dissection, and taxidermy, and anatomical study, which presently developed itself, must have had its unpleasant side. "Specimens," if kept in lockers or under beds, have a tendency to proclaim their presence

\* "*Life of Frank Buckland.*" By his brother-in-law, George C. Bompas. London: Smith, Elder, and Co.

to the olfactory nerves, and skulls and skins require some time before they can be pronounced free from objection. Finally, however, the top of the chapel tower was utilised, and there skulls and bones were bleached without offending anybody. Later on, the hospital contributed subjects for the boy's dissecting-knife, and some experiments which he made on certain "gruesome fragments of humanity," when he had made up his mind to become a surgeon, and characteristically set to work at once, very much disgusted the boys at College, as he himself wrote. But he was always popular at school. The good-humour, the amiability, the high spirits, the sweetness and gentleness of his disposition, the simple earnestness of his character, and his uniformly good conduct—of all of which some of his tutors and schoolfellows wrote with pleasant recollection many years after—stood him in good stead. Both with masters and boys, "Old Buckland" or "Fat Buckland" became the most popular boy in the school—"a short, quick-eyed little boy, with a shock of reddish-brown hair (not much amenable to a hairbrush), a white neckcloth tied like a piece of rope with no particular bow, and his hands sticking out under either ear as fancy pleased him—in fact, a boy utterly indifferent to personal appearance, but good-tempered and eccentric, with a small museum in his alleeve or cupboard, sometimes a snake, or a pet mouse, or a guinea-pig, or even a hedgehog." It is Mr. Frederick Gale who thus describes him, and the bright little sketch seems to bring the boy bodily before us.

At Oxford, to which University Frank Buckland went after leaving Winchester, being admitted as a commoner to Christ Church in 1844, it was just the same. "He was certainly one of the most popular men in Christ Church," Dr. Liddon says, and at Oxford his zoological and anatomical studies were pursued with increased zest and energy, although not without certain inconvenient results. Amongst the pets which this very unconventional undergraduate ventured to keep in the court of Fell's Buildings (since pulled down), where he "kept" on the ground-floor, were a bear called Tiglath Pileser, a monkey, an eagle, sundry marmots, and a jackal, and almost all of these creatures succeeded in compromising their proprietor at some time or another. Thus, one morning, "Frank was called in haste to remove the marmot from the Chapter House, as the Chapter was about to meet.

Another morning the eagle stationed himself in the chapel doorway, and attacked those about to enter, till he was rolled up in one of the students' gowns and carried off ignominiously." On yet another occasion the eagle had a fancy for attending service in the cathedral, and stalked up the aisle with outspread wings, to the amusement of the undergraduates and the horror of the Dean. Whether the Dean rusticated the eagle is not clear, but that fate certainly befell Tiglath Pileser, who exhausted the patience of the authorities at last. The animal was sent to Lalip, whence, after terrifying the neighbourhood nearly out of its wits on several occasions, he was promoted to the Zoological Gardens.

"Skeletons and stuffed specimens were numerous," Mr. Bompas tells us, in the rooms in Fell's Buildings, "and often anatomical preparations were in progress in the court," and, on the whole, it is clear that Frank Buckland's Oxford friends and guests required strong nerves, and strong stomachs too. "An odour of physical science hung about his rooms." When you called upon him in a casual way, you were very probably greeted with the intelligence that the adder was out and lively; when you went to coach him for his little-go, you had to tuck your legs up on the sofa to avoid the jackal, which you could by-and-by hear underneath you, devouring the guinea-pigs; when you went to breakfast with him, the marmots ran about the table, and "there were other beasts and reptiles in the room, too, which in later life would have made breakfasting difficult." And there must have been a good deal of noise as well as zoological excitement in the retirement of Fell's Buildings, and we can well believe the Rev. St. John Tyrerwhit, who says that quiet was not much promoted "by the appearance of a very broad-backed young man of personal strength and activity greatly exceeding his moderate height—having a shock chestnut-coloured head, a blue pea-jacket, a red German student's cap with a gold tassel"—the result of two long-vacation visits to Baron Liebig's laboratory at Giessen—"with a presumably harmless snake hanging out of his trousers' pocket, and bearing a scalpel and a trumpet, or perhaps a long Swiss wooden cow-horn." Mr. Tyrerwhit's portrait is a worthy companion to Mr. Gale's.

After leaving Oxford, Frank Buckland threw himself with characteristic energy into his medical studies, and after "passing the College," became house-surgeon at

St. George's, and, subsequently, for eight years, assistant-surgeon to the Second Life Guards. Gradually also, he settled down to literature as his favourite pursuit, making also successful appearances as a lecturer, and still finding time to attend to pets innumerable. The Westminster Deanery—Dr. Buckland was now Dean of Westminster—swarmed with all sorts of creatures, which must have sadly discomposed the servants and visitors. The stuffed figures of a hyena and of Tiglath Pileser, the bear—the latter of whom had, unfortunately, expired in an unsuccessful attempt to cut his teeth—confronted the timid stranger; snakes freely patrolled the stairs, and were occasionally produced to amuse the guests in the drawing-room, where also choice white rats were frequently to be found. It must have been rather a startling place on a first introduction.

In later days Frank Buckland's own house in Albany Street was much the same. Monkeys, snakes, suricates, parrots, and "laughing jackasses" abounded. A pig was an intimate friend of the family for some years. At another time a bear was the reigning favourite, and Buckland naively remarks, "To the servants, a bear was a bear, and it was very amusing to hear the shindy they kicked up, when in the course of his peregrinations about the house, Mr. Bear met them on the stairs, or went into the kitchen to warm himself." What with bears and monkeys, and the enormous fish, not always in the sweetest condition, which were continually arriving to be cast—not to mention the vast multitude of other evil-smelling specimens, or the giants and "two-headed nightingales" who were on the visiting-list—the Albany Street servants must have had a lively time of it.

More especially must the cook have required a strong set of nerves, and a phlegmatic temperament. Some of the opportunities for the exercise of her art which fell to her lot would have been too much for ordinary people. "The doctrine," said Frank Buckland once, "that it has been my lifelong study to urge, is the application of natural history to practice, and the increase of food for the public," and to this end he experimented upon himself with strange foods to quite an alarming extent.

This queer fancy, which exercised the genius of the cooks of his latter days, began very early. Already at Winchester squirrel-pie and mice cooked in batter

were looked upon as real dainties, while Frank Buckland has left it on record that "a roast field-mouse—not a house-mouse—is a splendid *bonne bouche* for a hungry boy; it eats like a lark." Very likely this is so; that house-mice are not to be recommended I can myself testify as the result of certain experiments which were made at Eton some five-and-thirty years ago. But roast field-mouse and squirrel-pie were very commonplace viands compared with what was to follow. Christ Church, for instance, was to see a very grisly meal in the shape of 'a dish of panther chops. The panther at the Surrey Zoological Gardens had died, and the curator, who was a friend of Buckland's, sent him notice of the melancholy fact. Says Frank, "I wrote up at once, to tell him to send me down some chops. It had, however, been buried a couple of days, but I got them to dig it up, and send me some. It was not very good." The criticism is delightful.

The Deanery at Westminster was a great place for these queer experimental feeds. Buckland's diary, under date March 9th, 1849, records a dinner-party at which were present "Huxley, Blayden, Rolfs," and at which they "had the lump-fish for dinner." "Very good, something like turtle," Buckland goes on to say. But the lump-fish was avenged on the very next day, when the significant entry is, "Rather seedy from the lumpfish!"

In fact, people who dined with Dean Buckland had to dine, greatly daring. At Christ Church he caused a certain pickled horse's tongue to be served up, and much appreciated it was until the guests were told what they had been eating—it is possible that we have all consumed horses' tongues under the pleasing delusion that they had once formed part of the accustomed ox—while alligator was a delicacy of—happily one would think—rare occurrence, puppies being occasionally and mice frequently eaten. At Westminster "hedge-hogs, tortoise, potted ostrich, and occasionally rats, frogs, and snails, were served up for the delectation of favoured guests. 'Party at the Deanery,' one guest notes; 'tripe for dinner; don't like crocodile for breakfast.'"

With Frank Buckland's strong desire to utilise the teachings of natural history in the direction of an increased and more varied food-supply, the Acclimatisation Society naturally had his warmest sympathies, and the first tentative dinner of its

promoter in 1859 left him enthusiastic on the subject of the merits of the eland. The roast haunch of this antelope was highly appreciated by all the guests, and both Professor Owen and Frank Buckland looked forward with confidence to the time when the animal should be regularly bred in this country, and when the haunch of the eland should be at least as common as haunch of venison. As the anticipated results have not yet been attained, it may be presumed that either the elands or the English climate did not see the thing in the same light. The first real dinner of the society, three years later, was managed by Frank Buckland. His own graphic and pleasant description of the various troubles which befell him, and of the brilliant success by which his efforts were ultimately crowned, will be found in Mr. Bompas's book, but is too long for quotation. Although there were many strange dishes, nothing particularly nasty was included in the bill-of-fare, except the Tripangs or Beche de Mer of China, the description of which cannot be read without a shudder by even the most hardened among the people "who don't care what they eat."

Some years later came the famous horse-dinner at the Langham Hotel, of which Frank Buckland has left a very unfavourable account, following it up by the record in his diary on the following day: "Very seedy indeed, partly effects of horse, partly of a very bad cold; felt very queer all day." So far as I remember—I went steadily through the horse-dinner myself, and have the bill-of-fare now before me—this description does the dinner injustice, and the blame of the seediness ought justly to be laid on the very bad cold. And this is the more likely as it is recorded that on another occasion Frank Buckland and Mr. Bartlett, of the Zoological Gardens, experimented again, and were unable to distinguish between prime steaks of horse and beef. Certainly if horse-meat is not altogether as good as good beef, there is nothing nasty or unwholesome about it.

But the diary chronicles many more gruesome meals than dinner of horse. "B. called; cooked a viper for luncheon," "Had some elephant trunk soup," the trunk having been boiled for weeks "without being sensibly mollified," are two entries which speak volumes for the writer's courage, as does another which records a supper of gore-fish, whose bright green bones—"the green, in fact, of verdigris in an old copper-ship"—would choke off most

people, but which, Frank Buckland says calmly, "are not poisonous, for I ate half-a-dozen of them for supper, and felt all the better for it." After this, roast giraffe, white, and tasting like veal, sounds quite appetising. The most ogglesome meal of all, however—worse, almost, than the famous panther chops—was the huge pie which was made for the delectation of the audience at one of his lectures at Brighton from the carcass of the old rhinoceros at the Zoological Gardens "which had recently died," and of the toughness of which one reads without surprise.

In connection with these strange meals, I have, myself, a very lively recollection of sitting, in 1861, next to Frank Buckland at a club-dinner in Covent Garden, when, after cross-examining me at much length—I had then just returned with some odd gastronomic experiences from China—he remarked incidentally, "Well, I think I have eaten almost everything that can be eaten." "Not 'long-pig,' I hope," said I. "Why not?" he answered solemnly, and then came the twinkle of the eye and the hearty laugh which warned me not to take the joke too seriously.

The direction, however, in which Frank Buckland saw that it was possible largely and practically to increase the stock of food available for the people was that of fish-culture, and by improving the condition of the salmon-rivers throughout the country to encourage the breed and increase of salmon. Into this object he threw himself with all the eagerness and earnestness of his nature, displaying all that determination thoroughly to learn his lesson which, as we have seen, his mother noticed in him at a very early age; and bringing to bear on the subject all the resources of a keen and thoughtful intellect, as well as the habits of observation and the powers of memory which he had cultivated so assiduously all his life. Very wisely he saw that, as compared with flour-mills, for example, salmon weirs and ladders could only take a second place, and when he was selected as an Inspector of Fisheries—and no better appointment could possibly have been made—he made it his business to gain his ends by coaxing and argument rather than by official bullying and laying down the law. How well he succeeded everybody knows, and now that everybody does know everybody must admit the truth of his remark that "there is no reason whatever why both mills, manufactories, and sal-

should not co-exist and flourish, provided there exists what is called in common parlance an element of give and take. . . . I feel convinced that persuasion is better than force, and that private interviews and subsequent communications will often succeed in obtaining for the salmon, what no Act of Parliament, in the absence of the Local Executive, could obtain."

How hard he worked to carry out his object we are told at length by Mr. Bompas—how he became "almost amphibious, wading the pools below the weirs, feeling the force and direction of the current, and striving, so far as it is possible to man, to enter into the feelings of a salmon." But the story is too long to tell here, and too good to spoil by wholesale condensation. One remark of his own may be quoted as showing the thoroughly sensible and practical view in which he looked at his work: "We must not, however, forget the ultimate verdict of whether a salmon-ladder be good or bad must be left to the decision of the salmon themselves; all we can do is to find out what they want, and accommodate them to the utmost of our powers." These are wise words, which many philanthropists and "friends of the working-man" might take to heart with advantage.

Another remark, as shrewd and observant, is also worth noting: "There are but three possible ways by which the passage of a weir may be effected by the fish; first, over the weir; second, through the weir; and third, round the weir. In contriving or altering a pass, it will be found a useful plan for the observer to imagine himself to be a salmon, and consider which of these three ways would be best for him to adopt." Rarely, indeed, has a scientific observer taken such practical views of his subject when action has to follow theory.

Robust as Frank Buckland's frame had been, the constant hard work involved in these piscicultural labours, and the exposure to all sorts of weather, which he never seemed to regard as anything out of the way, wore him out at a comparatively early age, and in December, 1880, his keen and active brain found rest.

"God is so good," he said just before his death; "so very good to the little fishes, I do not believe He would let their Inspector suffer shipwreck at last. . . . I am going a long journey, where I think I shall see a great many curious animals. This journey I must go alone."

It is refreshing, in these days when science and scepticism so often go

hand-in-hand, to find scattered all over Mr. Bompas's book unmistakable proofs of the simple, reverent piety which was one of the leading principles of Frank Buckland's mind. The more he studied, and the more he learnt, the more the great scheme of creation struck him with awe and wonder. The more he unravelled the mysteries of Nature, the more he recognised the wisdom and beneficence of the Creator, and the more humble and reverent he became. This frame of mind is anything but scientific, no doubt, but to my mind constitutes not the least of the reasons why Frank Buckland's life and work deserve the respect and admiration of all those lovers of Nature, who are content to hold to the old-fashioned belief in Creation as having been the result of a wise and beneficent, if mysterious plan, rather than the result of blind chance, of accidental evolution, or of the fortuitous concurrence of a variety of atoms—which, indeed, must themselves have had a beginning and a Creator, after all is said and done.

## FLORIDA SKETCHES.

### JACKSONVILLE.

#### IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

JACKSONVILLE, though not the capital of Florida, is by far the most important city of the State, as also the most popular. So long ago—long ago, that is, by the standard of American progress—as 1870, it numbered some seven thousand people, as compared with Pensacola, its neighbour in size, with three thousand three hundred, and I am probably doing the city a wrong by estimating its fixed population to-day at no more than ten thousand, blacks and whites being equally divided. From November to May, however, Jacksonville is annually a refuge for thousands of northerners, who cannot or will not endure a temperature with a fancy for zero; and this, the Florida season, is the time of Jacksonville's gaiety and civic prosperity. Throughout the States, from Oregon to Virginia, people may bury themselves in furs, and be moderately happy only when inside houses hermetically sealed, and warmed until the atmosphere is as that of an oven; while at Jacksonville, contemporaneously, overcoats are scoffed at; store and hotel doors are as courteously open as in summer; the niggers are content to sprawl themselves about the river-wharves, singing, laughing, chewing sugar-cane, or chaffing coloured damsels; and the orange harvest is in full swing, and

putting money into the pockets of all ranks and conditions of men.

To be sure, Jacksonville is not altogether as free from frost as may be supposed. The winter of 1883-1884, for instance, was a surprise to some, both residents and visitors, when, night after night, the thermometer went down to freezing-point, and, day after day, a chilly north wind swept that most interesting of thoroughfares—Bay Street—comparatively bare of loiterers. During this dread away of wintry weather, doors were kept closed, log-fires and extra blankets were the rule, the hotel balconies were deserted, and more whisky than iced-water was drunk. But, as a seasonable set-off and accompaniment, the grocery and other stores put on their Christmas garb, the booksellers filled their windows with Christmas-cards, wild turkey and plum-pudding, "piping hot," were a matter-of-course in every restaurant; the niggers became riotously merry; and jovial good wishes for the present and the future were exchanged with every salutation. And if the crop of murders and deaths by violence in the city and suburbs was exceptionally large, it was of course deplorable, but no doubt attributable to the exceptional weather.

But Jacksonville has grown well into civilisation by this time. Not now may prismatic flights of two or three hundred parrots in a body be seen from the streets of the city. Alligators no longer lie at their ease on the sandy, shelving shore, a stone's-throw from the Court House. Instead of finding a bear in a couple of hours, he is happy who discovers one within a couple of days' journey of the city. And deer, wild turkey, and partridge are now less for the casual city sportsman than for the systematic hunter. Even the river, which is the glory of the city, has done supplying the stomachs of respectable citizens with a dinner-course; the black breed of fish, which alone is caught from the wharves, being deemed unfit for any but black stomachs.

No, the halcyon days when money could be made in Jacksonville, and Nature in all her profusion be enjoyed at the same time, are over. One may still, from a city verandah, see and hear a couple of stately mocking-birds having a quarrel, and chattering rude things at each other in the lemon-tree of a neighbouring garden. Two or three lustrous and half-bewildered blue-birds may yet flit in association across a street. A red-crested woodpecker may

still be seen energetically at work upon a live oak-trunk a few feet from the telegraph-wires, which touch the branches, on their way to New York. Wild ducks by half-dozens may now and again strike the eye, as they hasten over the waters towards the South, keeping near the banks on the other, and almost uninhabited, side of the river. A miserable cat, once wild, may be noticed here and there about the city, with a look in her eyes of agonising doubt as to whether or not she has done the best for herself in giving up the freedom of nature, and the struggle for an independent existence, in exchange for the merely sensual satisfaction of a domesticity which, in its effects, is synonymous with a silken-fettered captivity. But all big game is gone. The sportsman of a few hours must content himself with blue jays, mocking-birds, robins, redheads, and a large sparrow-like bird which some call grouse. Nor are such small fry to be despised gastronomically. I have lunched very fairly off a Florida robin, which for flavour and plumpness cannot easily be matched; and Jacksonville has a hundred cooks who could tickle a gourmand's palate with a Florida bird-stew. As for the bears, panthers, and deer, the last may be bought in the meat-market at fifteen cents the pound, and the two first may be dreamed of. With the alligators, however, it is different. They may be seen alive and dead in several shops in Bay Street—young ones, whose length is measured by inches only, kept in tanks for purchasers, looking plaintively unhappy as they wallow in the shallow water, and flounder helplessly over and under each other; and old ones, either whole and stuffed, or skinned and made into port-manteaux, boots, and shoes, book-covers, satchels, and what not—the teeth being noticeably abundant, and mounted for use as pins, necklaces, brooches, earrings, etc.

Yet, though so civilised, there is always the element of savagery remaining in Jacksonville, in the persons of its coloured inhabitants; so a white man once explained it to me. The coloured folk are as happy as colliers at half-a-guinea a day, so long as they can get plenty to eat and drink; their high spirits are certainly instinctive, and in no measure diminished by a consciousness of their blackness, or the deficiency in intellectual culture. And their prosperity is commensurate with that of Jacksonville. But only a few years ago, when there was a strike among the workers at the saw-mills down the river,

and several hundred blacks, in a state of irritation, were loosed about the city, there was serious trouble in Jacksonville. Given an angry black in any one of the Southern States, and at least one very angry white may safely be postulated. These five or six hundred blacks soon had the city in an uproar, what with their tongues and the inane practice of firing revolvers in the air for intimidation, or self-encouragement; and very quickly the white citizens associated and armed themselves, to the number of fifty or sixty. Then came the tug of war, and in a day or two the darkies were at work again, except some thirty of them, who were either killed or wounded. This is a sombre episode. But since then whites and blacks have gone in steadily for accumulating money, or money's worth, and with such success, among these latter, that pianos may be heard right and left during a walk after sundown in the coloured residents' part of the city, and the coloured gentlemen and ladies alike are able to indulge themselves in unlimited medicines and fine clothes.

Jacksonville may be seen at its very best on a sunny day in January or February. Then it is that the glitter of shops and stores proves most irresistible; the clear bright atmosphere enhances everything and everybody, and the lady or gentleman who finds it inconvenient to join in the pretty general promenade of the chief street, or is indisposed to idle, or pose statuesquely in public, loses a sight worth seeing. The throng of people is distinctly cosmopolitan in its characteristics. Oddities in long hair and fantastic raiment from Texas and the West, where convention is a myth, walk side-by-side with the latest "dude," or masher, from New York or Boston. Fine ladies in Paris fashions, and beautiful girls just a trifle too self-conscious of their beauty, elbow laughing coloured ladies in prints, with blue full-moons on a white background, their bonnets stuck well on the rear of their heads, so that no part of their countenances may be hid from the eyes of an admiring mankind. A gentleman from Kentucky, sallow and with conspicuous cheek-bones, goes arm-in-arm with an ex-planter from Virginia, both smoking furiously, and discussing Congress peccadilloes loud enough for a hundred others to hear them. A couple of native Floridians ("crackers," as they are locally called), followed by a boy, the son of one of them, are noteworthy for the speckled and corpse-complexioned faces which mark them from

the rest of the world, hardly less than for their look of extreme imbecility, and want of interest in anything. They have their hands in their pockets, their eyes lack lustre, and their mouths are open. Talk to one of them on any subject save oranges, sugar-cane, tobacco, mules, or women, and the chances are he will be completely dazed.

Behind the "crackers" comes one of Jacksonville's most eminent physicians, a little dark man with spectacles on his nose, and a quick, nervous step indicative of the enquiring and active mind within him. Yet, like ninety per cent. of the men around him, he was not born in Jacksonville. He is a Frenchman from Orleans, and was middle-aged when he came to an anchor in the Orange State, which suits his health, and brings him as many patients at five dollars a visit as he cares to have. For, by a merciful dispensation of Providence, there comes a time annually to almost every resident in Florida when the conviction that he has a liver, and that the liver is out of order, is forced home to him. Universal cures for fever and ague, chills and liver-complaint, may be, as they are, placarded on the cypress and pine-trees up and down the river-banks, in the midst of forests traversed only by thin white tracks, or on deserted nigger shanties miles away from regular human habitations, such quackeries are certainly to be had at country drug-stores from country practitioners—but well-brought-up people had much better go to a city physician with a reputation gained and to be maintained.

Nor must I forget the Britishers in the Jacksonville streets. They do not exactly swarm, but the number of them is truly remarkable, and they are discerned without much inquisitiveness. The "bunko" man—a local rascal who claims friendship with you and coaxes you into a beershop, with ulterior designs on your pocket—makes sure of a prey when he sees a new Englishman strolling a little aimlessly across the sandy tramway-track of the road. For the young English emigrant of the middle class, with several hundred dollars of capital in greenbacks in his pocket, has a knack of looking very much more stupid and incapable than he really is, just as the young American of the States is fond of apeing an omniscience and worldly wisdom which he is very far indeed from possessing. It is possible the "bunko" man does succeed more often than not with these new arrivals—succeed moderately, that is. For he makes a



caressing appeal to the heart of his victim at a time when that heart is maybe feeling the want of a little sympathy of some kind. But the Englishman is much less thorough a victim than the hobbledehoy of a mother's pride from some well-established sleepy country town of Indiana or Ohio, who has seduced or bullied his fond parent into sending him South with all the family dollars that can be spared, so that he may buy an orange-grove and secure an easy and regular income for his loved ones and himself in the future. The cut of his clothes denotes the Englishman, even if oftentimes his superior physique did not proclaim him, and his red-and-white complexion sufficiently indicates him as a stranger to warm suns in unbroken continuity. Moreover, his tongue is considerably more civil to the casual wayfarer—even if a "bunko" man—who accosts him, though at the same time his eyes may look with incredible surprise and self-conceit into the eyes of the other. "You want a deal of licking, you Britishers, before you can be made to understand there's others in the world as sharp, and that's as good as your own dear selves. While you're thinking of turning up your coat-cuffs, an American has got his pine down and branched," said a veteran Southerner to me, and he went on to say how this attitude in my countrymen gained for them a great deal of ridicule, not a little envy, and therefore very little real goodwill. Besides the emigrant Englishman, there is the well-to-do Englishman, the director, may be, of a Florida Land Company, the man with an income of thousands a year in England, who hopes to establish in Florida what will soon bring him in thousands more. He is conspicuous on his horse, and by his riding in the saddle when he forces a trot. A smart man, he is proclaimed to be by the score of American financiers who drop cards at his hotel—the Windsor—as soon as his arrival in the city is announced in the daily paper; but this does not hinder them from trying to cut diamond with diamond, to pit Wall Street dodges against his board-room wisdom. And if the rich Englishman have an English lady or two in his following, also mounted, why it is only so much additional proclamation of nationality; for the grace of an English horsewoman is the inheritance of centuries, and much more attractive than the free-and-easy way in which an American young lady allows herself to be pitched and tossed about with every motion of her horse.

But perhaps a general view of the sojourners in the city may best be obtained at the post-office from nine to eleven a.m., when letters are being distributed. Here men and women, black and white, rich and poor, honest men and rogues, help to form lengthy "queues," which sometimes bend and double outside, along the pavement, and into the roadway—a human obstruction which ordinary passers-by now and then have difficulty in bisecting. A coloured man, bare-footed, unwashed, oily, odoriferous, and in rags, is equitably sandwiched between a New York millionaire, who will trust no one to fetch his letters but himself, and a gentleman from Paris with snowy Byronic collar, close-cut hair, irreproachable gloves, and a well-curled beaver. Here a nigger damsel, with jewels from her ears, on her fingers, and about her neck, wearing a hat with an overshadowing ostrich-feather trailing behind, in a red body, a blue skirt, and bits of white filigree work for lace in her bosom and at her wrists, may be seen standing expectantly with a Sister of Mercy before her; while behind, with curled lips and ineffable disdain on her face, a fair thing from Boston, in high-heeled shoes and garments of the most bewitching æsthetic tints and textures, is compelled by the laws of an enlightened generation of humanity to take her stand. There is no manifest rudeness on the part of some who are in a hurry to get served before others, though knit brows, restless turning to and fro of bodies, and the beating of feet show that the volcano of impatience would like to find a vent if it did but dare. This absence of hanteur between man and man is less remarkable to an Englishman in these days than it was half a century ago. We should not now be so ready to explain it as "sweetness of temper," as was Miss Martineau, though this lady's words on the subject may be worth remembering. "I imagine," she says, "that the practice of forbearance requisite in a republic is answerable for this peculiarity. In a republic no man can in theory overbear his neighbour; nor, as he values his own rights, can he do so much or long in practice. The right of grumbling and protestation is a time-honoured privilege with us when we have, or think we have, a grievance; and long may it be ere we determine to substitute revolvers for the growls which at present happily suffice to purge us of our evil humours, and restore us to comparative

equanimity. It seems a pity that a man should sit so hard on a passion, as it were, unconsciously forcing it, until suddenly it blows him asunder, and destroys others besides himself, whereas a little judicious air would have dissipated its malignity, and then put an end to it altogether."

The St. John's River has been called "the glory of Jacksonville," and I think all who know the city will forgive the phrase. Whether seen by the morning light, when the grey-blue mist is lifting from its surface, momentarily uncovering yard after yard of it, or when the full glare of the midday sun is dazzlingly mirrored in its waters, or lastly, when the sun is going fast, red as an orange, behind the green tops of the forest trees, which come to the water's edge, where it makes a noble curve towards Palatka, and the thin mist again begins to gather for the night, the river is an absorbing feature of the place. Where the city stands it may be a mile in width, but it broadens to three and four miles when you get past yon headland of pines on the other bank. Looking up the river from the railway-station, it is as though one were at the head of a lake whose other end is lost in the horizon. And night and day the river is churned by the commodious little steamers which, during the winter months, are crowded with visitors, prospectors, and settlers, for the fifteen hours' journey up stream to Sanford, and return laden with hundreds of boxes of oranges and well-satisfied tourists. Never have I heard such enthusiasm as that of old world travelled men on board these boats after a voyage up and down the St. John's.

"Seen any alligators?" one of these men was asked when he landed at the Jacksonville wharf.

"Alligators be hanged! I've seen the finest country in the world, and going begging too."

This was a year ago, and there is much less of it going begging now.

A very fine land view of Jacksonville may be seen by walking a mile or so from the Savannah railway track, up the dreadfully sandy road which runs due south into the forest, after serving the few choice villas surrounded with small orange-groves which here skirt the river-bank. When the road comes to an end, you are on a springy turf, with pines to the right and left, a dense forest growth before you, the incessant chirruping of grasshoppers on all sides, and multitudes of bees and butterflies in the air about you. Plunge into the thicket, first

taking your bearings of the river, which is glistening beyond and below, past this mighty pine with a gash in his side, whence the sap has been drawn, over the tiresome palmetto-roots, which have intertwined like so many serpents' coils, under the shadow of this magnificent magnolia, one hundred and twenty feet high at least, until you are at the water's edge. Here, maybe, you will be conscious of an unpleasant change of temperature, an odd damp warmth proceeding from the rank vegetation about you; but you need not stay long enough to inhale the germs of malaria. Looked at from this point, Jacksonville reminds one of Canaletto's pictures of Venice. Here is the blue sky overhead, the sparkling water in the foreground, the long façades of the hotels and chief buildings of the city, red, white, and olive-colour; the taper masts of half-a-dozen merchantmen clear against the houses; two or three white sails on the water, while the smoke from a steamer getting ready to leave her moorings drifts leisurely through the air. There are no factory-chimneys to mar the picture, but just sufficient marks of commercial activity to give life to what else would seem a mere picture, divorced from human interest.

Then, back, if you will, into the city, and to the wharves lately viewed from a distance. The steamer, getting herself into going order, is taking freight for the river-side places of call—a bedstead and a stove for this settler, a keg of nails and a piano for that, a span of oxen for a sleepy "cracker" who knows nothing of Watt's invention, and a milch-cow for a nigger whose crop of sugar-cane has been such as to allow of the investment. Coloured workers are running the packages on board, with many a whoop, solacing themselves, maybe, for their extraordinary exertion by the hope of a snooze as soon as the boat is under weigh. On the other side of the wharf a brace of nigger urchins are fishing. They have good sport, if sport be their object, for the fish are so plentiful, and the water is so clear, that they can drop their bait (a morsel of pork-rind) before the very nose of their intended victim. A yard of sugar-cane, coloured like a well-smoked meerschaum, lies between them, and, when the business in hand is not too enthralling, the youngsters bite an inch off the cane, each keeping to his own end. For five cents you may buy an entire ratoon, eight, nine, or even ten feet long, from the

proprietor of the little alloop anchored near the nigger boys. He has brought the produce of his patch to market, and is only waiting a purchaser.

Passing to the next wharf, we find two large schooners alongside, both flying British colours. They are from Nassau in the Bahamas, and after a stormy passage have reached Jacksonville with a cargo of bananas, cocoa-nuts, fancy seaweed, dried starfish, corals, and shells. By peeping into the hold of one of them, you may see hundreds of fine banana-clusters, mostly unripe, suspended to mature, and a ton or two of nuts for ballast. The Boston and New York ladies are fond of coral and such conches as the West Indies produce; and a little huckstering with these heavy, bronzed seamen who are joint partners in the cargo, is a pleasant enough pastime for an hour or so. They do not care to carry their purchases home, however; a nigger-boy saves them this trouble for a nickel.

The next is an oyster-wharf, where three or four boats are forced almost to the water's-edge by the weight of their cargoes. The oyster-merchant is overlooking the clearance of his goods, which are being shovelled into buckets and thence into barrels as fast as nigger arms can do the work. Ask the man if they are good quality, and he will reply by knocking the end off one of them with his knife, and politely presenting you with the quivering bivalve. Close by a rough counter is rigged up, where a plateful of the dainties may be eaten in the shade for a matter of ten cents.

The fish-market is a step or two farther on. It is a mere shed, the floor littered with the different catches of the enterprising fishermen or boys, in twos, threes, or fours, strung together by means of a stout rush passed through the gills of the fishes. There is not much variety, and you are in luck's way if you carry off anything but a mullet, about the flavour of which there are at least two opinions.

The meat market is a larger and more commodious building on another wharf, convenient for the disposal of offal and refuse. One does not exactly go through this place for the pleasure of the walk, there being at all times a smell here which is not pleasant, however nutritious. But, apart from this, there is abundance of fat

and lean to choose from; though a well-travelled Chicago beefsteak is but a poor concern in comparison with the juicy steak of a Fleet Street chop-house. As for mutton in Jacksonville, one marvels how the sheep lived, and why it died, the while one tries to enjoy a part of it. There is a very satisfactory show of dead fowls and turkeys, with here and there a rabbit, a squirrel, or a skinned coon, a shoulder of venison, or a bit of a bear. Among the vegetables, the eye rests on the green and red tomatoes (it is January, if you please), the flame-coloured pumpkins, and the purple egg-plants, careless of such common products as potatoes, whether sweet or Irish, or cabbages ready to burst with plumpness at five cents apiece. Oranges there are in abundance, but outside the market. Two or three boatloads are heavily rising and falling with the wash of the river, pending the time when the lordly commission-agent shall deign to cast an eye on them, or the auctioneer shall come to knock them down at so much a hundred to the highest bidder. When such a sale as this is on the carpet, it is well to join the crowd who are supposed to be possible purchasers, and take your orange for sample as composedly as you can. I have seen a portly and very well-to-do gentleman from Philadelphia, who was wintering in Jacksonville for his health, go from sale-place to sale-place, and suck orange after orange without a suggestion of conscience in his face, and only opening his mouth to expel the pips. Talking of pips, however, no one Florida born would think of wasting these oranges in embryo by throwing them away; their market value is so many dollars the bushel.

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No. 873. NEW SERIES      SATURDAY, AUGUST 22, 1885.      PRICE TWOPENCE

### ONLY A BUSINESS MAN.

By MAY DRYDEN.

#### CHAPTER XXX.

GORDON gave himself no time for reflection, but proceeded at once to put into action the resolution to which he and Phoebe had come, for, though neither of them had put it into words, both of them knew very well what it was.

To both it seemed that the only upright and honourable course that remained to Gordon, was for him to ask Deborah to be his wife. That she loved him neither could doubt, and a woman's love is, in itself, a claim on a man's generosity. She had saved his life; it seemed to him that, for that reason, it now belonged in some degree to her. But the strongest, and, indeed, the only sufficient ground for the action he intended to take was the slur which, by her innocent devotion to him, had been cast upon her name, and which, it seemed to him, nothing else would wipe away. That she was in a different rank of life from himself only made it more binding upon him to vindicate her honour as fully as possible. So it seemed to him. And, in reality, she was not his inferior except in point of wealth. Had she been coarse, common, vulgar, or even such an one as her sister Minnie, whose only recommendations were beauty and a gentle, womanly heart, nothing would have induced him to marry her.

But Deborah was a high-souled, large-hearted, large-minded woman, noble in aim, pure in impulse, possessed of true refinement, a fairly good education, and, what was better than any education, the will and the power to acquire knowledge for its own sake.

That such a woman should suffer on his

account seemed to him terrible—a thing not to be permitted, while he could in any way hinder it. Therefore he made up his mind to propose for her openly, letting who would know of his so doing, and making his purpose known first to her father and mother.

If she married him, he could take care that no one handled her name lightly. If she declined to accept his proposal, her doing so would in itself be sufficient disproof of the wicked scandal which had been set on foot.

It had not, however, really entered into his head that she would refuse him; to Phoebe that seemed, not unnaturally, an almost impossible contingency.

Gordon never expected that things would turn out well for him. He was always prone to look on the darkest side of things, and, taking his life very hardly, suffered almost as much in anticipation of evil as in evil itself.

He went home after leaving Phoebe and spent an hour very quietly with Clarence, speaking with her gently and affectionately about Luke and her own plans, telling her how pleased he was to have so fine a fellow for his brother-in-law, and how he meant to bring about their marriage as soon as possible. He even took an interest in all she could tell him of the unfortunate Dick and his doings.

About dusk, when he knew that the lads and lasses would be returning from their Saturday afternoon rambles, and that many of them would be sure to see him, he walked slowly down to the Hollow and knocked at Isaac Leighton's cottage-door.

Isaac himself opened it to him and bade him enter, not over cordially. He thought it inconsiderate and careless, to say the least of it, in Gordon to have come there at all after what he must know had been

said, and especially to have come at that time. No suspicion of the young man's real purpose entered his mind, and his irritation accordingly found vent in words.

"Be yo' ignorant what is sayin' abeant yo' and eawr Debby, Measter Fenchurch, that yo'n come neaw when all th' idlers i' th' neebourhood con see yo' to mak' more talk o' th' poor lass?"

"I come now on purpose," said Gordon quietly, "that as many people might see me as possible, and that you might tell them, when they mention the matter, what I came for."

"I don't understand yo', sir. What have yo' come fur?"

Gordon paused a moment, not hesitating, but considering how best to frame his speech, so as to be exactly true to himself, yet respectful to Deborah and her father. Then he said simply:

"I have come to ask you if you will give me Deborah to be my wife. Stop a moment, Mr. Leighton," he went on as Isaac was about to answer him; "you must not think for a moment that I imagine that I am condescending to your daughter in asking her to marry me. I will not deny to you that my reason for doing so is that I may show, as fully as man can show, my respect for her. But, do believe me, I know very well how good and true she is—a woman whom any man, were he the finest gentleman in the land, might be proud to have for a wife. On my honour, if you will trust her to me, I will do my very best to make her happy."

"I doubt yo' couldna' do it, sir," said Isaac very gravely. "Not if yo' wur to kill yo' resel' i' tryin'. Have yo' yet to learn that theer is a sort o' woman that asks fur nowt less in a husband than love? Aw know theer's nowt con stop th' heart clemming of themsave that—nother respect, nor kindness, nor plenty of money. Eawr Deborah is one of that sort. Aw believe yo're doin' yo're best, sir; but it wonna' do, and try so how yo' will, yo' conna better it. Moreover, loike should wed wi' loike. Deborah hersel' will say so. But that is fur her to decide. Anyway, aw thank yo', sir."

There was a break in Leighton's voice as he put his hand in Gordon's as he finished speaking. There was a moment's silence, then, turning to his wife, he bade her go and bring Deborah if she felt well enough to see the master. The good woman, who had been listening, overcome with pride and astonishment, obeyed without saying a word.

In a minute or two Deborah came, and her father, placing her tenderly in a great cushioned elbow-chair by the hearth, said to Gordon:

"Sir, yo'll mind that th' lass is far from strong, and donnot bide too long."

"I will be very careful," said Gordon; and so Isaac and his wife went away and left him alone with Deborah.

He stood before her, leaning with one shoulder against the high mantelpiece, his hands loosely clasped behind him.

She was the first to break the silence.

"You are very good to come and see me," said she.

"No; I should have been before if it would have been any use. You have a right to anything I can do for you."

"You look very ill, sir," said she pityingly.

"Not so ill as you, I think, Deborah; you have had a great deal of suffering on my account. I have never thanked you."

"There is no need. I have more pleasure than pain. Indeed, I am very content."

He looked at her wonderingly as she lay back in her chair, a thoughtful smile on her lips, a dreamy look of pleasure in her eyes. It struck him as strangely incongruous that anyone should be content when he was so unhappy. The feeling in his heart was that of the sad old song, "How can ye sing, ye little birds, and I see weary, fu' o' care?"—an unreasonable one enough.

"I think you are content," said he. "Is it because you saved my life?"

"Yes; for that and other reasons."

"Deborah, the life you saved is not worth very much; but, such as it is, will you have it?"

"I do not understand you."

"I came here to-night to ask you to marry me. If you will take me for your husband, Deborah, you shall do what you please with my life; we will work together for your ends and aims, and I will do my best to make you happy as long as I live!"

"Oh!"

Deborah clasped her hands on her knees and leant forward, looking into the fire. They were both so silent that they could hear the crackling of the coal as it burned, and a falling cinder made Gordon start nervously.

"Well?" said he presently.

"Do you know what you are saying?"

"Yes; I am not acting on impulse."

have thought it out carefully. I mean what I say. It is much the best way."

"No, it is not the best way. I know of what you are thinking. You make a mistake there; I do not care about that. When our people see me about again, they will not doubt me. Your way would not be best for you or me."

"Think again, Deborah. I am very much in earnest."

"Yes, I know. I thank you. You have made me very happy. Yes," she went on dreamily; "I am quite happy. I have saved your life, and you have thought well enough of me to make me your wife."

She rose and came nearer to him, excitement giving her strength.

"God bless you!" said she. "I believe you are the truest gentleman alive. I am a woman, and do you think I have not seen what you are giving up for me? You offer me what would be heaven, if it were my right and I dared to take it. But to live all my life in sight of you—ah, it belongs to someone else! And I, on my own account, dare not take it. You spoke of my work in life; that work I must be true to. The man does not live that I would wed. He must needs be like you, and one of my own class. How could that be? But whatever comes or goes, you and your sister, and your wife that is to be, have made my life happy to me."

She staggered, and would have fallen, but that he caught her in his arms and laid her gently in her chair.

She seized his hand as he stooped over her, and kissed it vehemently, then turned her face away, and murmured:

"Go now—go, and send my mother to me."

There was no need. As he opened the door and went out, they entered. He stepped away into the darkness with a light of joy in his soul which was never more to be put out.

#### CHAPTER XXXI.

HOME—home, to tell Clarence all about it. That was Gordon's first thought as he turned away from the Hollow. Dear Clarence, sweet Clarence, how glad she would be!

"Why," he said, stopping, and speaking aloud, "she will not believe it. I can hardly believe it myself, that things can begin to go right for me."

And then he cried shame upon himself for a selfish fellow, always caring most for

himself; and the great tears came into his eyes with the thoughts of Phoebe, and the delight it would be to see her happy, and her face with the look of care and pain gone from it.

But he could not tell her to-night; he could not control himself to tell her to-night. And yet, must she lie awake and cry in the dark, when there was no need? She did cry at night, sometimes, he knew. She had said so once, apropos of some household trouble, and then had blushed, ashamed to seem to be asking for pity, and turned it off with a laugh, saying she had no time during the day for such nonsense.

He seemed to see her face before him as he turned up the Holme drive, and hurried on and in, with no need to knock, since Clarence stood at the door waiting for him.

So he carried his great joy, as he had carried all his griefs since he knew what grief was, to his sister's heart, and she felt that this was the crown of her care and love for him.

It seemed to him strange, as his joy was strange, to find her able to sympathise with him in it, as she had sympathised in all his sorrows and worries, and he said so.

"You forget, dear," she answered; "just lately I have been learning what joy is, as well as you."

"You are a wonderful woman," said he. "All this week long you have been happy, and you have put your happiness on one side to be unhappy with me. How did you do it?"

"Habit, I suppose, brother mine. Do you think I could be quite happy if you were not so too? Besides, happiness does not spoil with keeping, and women often have to let their own concerns wait. But, take warning, Gordon; I am not going to be unhappy with you any more. I am afraid I have done so rather too much. You must give up being morbid now. Phoebe is as sweet and sensible a little soul as there is in England, and you can just take pattern by her."

"Aye," said he, flinging his head back, as though to throw off all his worldly cares, and looking, in his happiness, as Clarence contentedly noted, younger than he had done for years; "aye, and what shall I do about Phoebe, Clarence? I cannot bear the thought of her being unhappy another night. And still—poor weak fool that I am—I dare not trust myself to go and speak to her to-night. I should break down, and frighten the dear

little woman out of her wits. My poor little grey woman—do you remember, Clarence?"

He rose, and began to stride impatiently about the room.

"I must get the better of this nervousness, Clarence; it is making an old man of me—wearing me out, and it is so weak and womanish."

"Ah!" said Clarence. "Now I should have said, speaking from my experience, that it was manish. But you are right. You must get rid of it. Whatever you do with yourself, you must not wear Phoebe out; must you?"

"I am afraid I have worn you out many a time, dear lass," said he remorsefully.

"And I am afraid you are talking nonsense, dear lad," replied she affectionately. "Do I look worn out?"

She certainly did not. She looked the very incarnation of life, and health, and happiness.

"Listen!" she continued; "I'll run down to Phoebe myself. It is quite early yet. She shall be made happy to-night, and to-morrow you shall blend your happiness, you two dear, ridiculous young people."

"Thanks. Do go, dear; only come back as quickly as you can."

"Not I. I will send Luke up to keep you company, and you can tell Dick to come presently and bring me home. Phoebe and I shall have a good deal to say to each other."

"Aye, surely. But where is Dick? I have not seen the lad all day."

"He is up to his eyes in paper and ink, and trying to persuade himself that he needs nothing else to make him happy. Now, mind you unbury him, Gordon, and send him for me. Tell him I particularly desired it. He always does what I want him to do."

So away sped Clarence, and in a few minutes was knocking at Mr. Carfield's door, which was opened to her by Luke.

"You!" he exclaimed. "And alone! Is Gordon ill?"

"No; there is nothing wrong," she answered. "Everything is all right; but I want Phoebe, Luke dear."

"Phoebe is lying down upstairs; she has a headache, I believe. You must not stay with her too long, Clarence, or you may make it worse. Come down quickly, and I'll walk home with you."

"No, you won't, sir. You will just go

right up to Gordon as quickly as you can, and keep him company while I cure Phoebe's headache. Do, Luke, and stay there until I come home. Gordon will tell you why. I cannot tell anyone until I've told Phoebe."

Here Phoebe's voice was heard calling to Clarence, and begging her to come up. With a nod and a smile to Luke, she ran upstairs, and Phoebe flung her arms round her, and drew her into her room. Then the poor tired child laid her head on her friend's bosom, and burst into tears, crying so passionately that Clarence's first thought had to be to calm her a little. Presently she looked up, and sobbed out:

"Oh, Clarence, Clarence! I am so tired, and so unhappy, and I have so wanted you!"

"Why, yes, dear, of course; that is just what you have wanted. And here I am, come like a bird of good omen, to predict that everything is going to turn out well after all. Not that birds do predict. Never mind, Phoebe. It is all right."

"All right!"

"Yes; the prince married the princess, and they all lived happily ever afterwards. Silly little woman! did you and Gordon really imagine that Deborah was bound to marry him? No; Deborah is quite another sort of woman from that—the darling."

"Clarence, I never thought it possible. Am I really going to be happy, after all? I never thought it possible."

Before Dick came for his cousin that night, she had convinced Phoebe that it was possible that she should be happy—in fact, left her so happy that it was hardly likely she could have any more doubts on the subject.

Dick came for Clarence in due time, but Matty divined his presence in some mysterious way, and kept carefully out of sight, so that Clarence's kindly intentions on his behalf were frustrated. To her surprise, as they left the house, he said, in a tone of gentle commiseration:

"Never mind, dear."

"Never mind what?" she answered.

"Your plans falling through, my kind cousin. Don't trouble yourself; I do not. I assure you I am quite contented. The fruit is not quite ripe yet. When it is I shall gather it all right. You will see."

"Well," said Clarence, "you are the queerest boy, Dick, I ever saw. I can hardly believe that you are akin to Gordon; you are so free from anxiety."

"Ah, you see, Gordon has monopolised all that commodity that fell to the share of our family. There was none left for me. Good-night, Clarence!"

## FLORIDA SKETCHES.

### JACKSONVILLE.

#### IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

IN the winter-time in Jacksonville, one does not see many of those pests of the insect-world which one instinctively connects with latitude thirty degrees. Mosquitoes are rarities. True, whenever my thermometer approached the seventies after sundown, I was tempted in pursuit of one or more of these villainous inventions of Nature, who were generally dull-headed enough, after giving their buzz of warning, which is surely to them the trumpet of attack, to settle full on the whitewashed ceiling, which threw them into a relief that was speedily fatal to them. But in the daytime they are out of sight and hearing. Ants are, perhaps, more annoying. There are the big ants and the little ones—the big ones with three very decided parts to each body, and furnished with nippers of much keenness, who make no scruple about climbing the legs of your dinner-table, one after the other, and coming with mathematical directness, and a precision smacking of the drill-sergeant, towards you and your plate. Nor are they easily discomfited. Hoping to divert the rest from their attention to my dinner, I have now and again killed one of these large fellows and civilly put the carcase in the way of the others, relying on their goodness of nature and sympathetic dispositions not to give their dead comrade the cold shoulder; but, so far from one dead ant serving to make them forget my plate in their eagerness to carry off the body and pay all due funeral honours to it, to me it seemed that the defunct was so much additional incitement to the rest to make haste forward. Those that noticed the body approached it gingerly, touched it with their antennæ, and then set off again in a scamper, as though anxious to forget so dolorous a subject as death. Now and then I dined in a little restaurant where these ants were peculiarly plentiful, so that I deemed it prudent to set my legs on a chair during the meal, and keep a very sharp eye on all the approaches to the different plates which held my dinner. Once I drew the attention of the little black bare-legged girl who

waited on me to the creatures, asking her with some severity whence they came. "Oh, they bite, they do!" said she, pausing, with her mouth and eyes wide open, to watch their progress along the chequered tablecloth; and then with a shiver, she caught hold of her scanty skirts and marched out on her toes. A minute later in came the mistress of the establishment, a full-blown "yellow" lady, of well-mellowed personal charms, and, after a hasty apology, she seized the nearest dinner-knife, and with a harsh ejaculation, "Oh, the dem nasty things!" began smashing the unfortunate ants, one after the other, with the broad of the blade—her teeth set cruelly, and such a ferocious expression on her face that I myself might reasonably have had some personal fears, had I not been a customer. Oddly enough, however, my sympathies veered round instantaneously to the side of the ants, and I begged the woman to desist from her massacre, or at least to postpone it. "Oh yes," said she, smiling now with her teeth and eyes; "it's only some gentlemen as they come to;" which put quite a new face on the affair, and made me almost grateful to the ants that they had had enough discrimination to choose me for a spectator of their natural habits and vagaries.

As for the smaller ants, they seem ubiquitous. I have found them in all my boxes and bags, however tightly these were closed. They colonised in my sponge, so that twice a day I had to try a "drowning out," which was never successful. They went to bed with me, and were the most irritable of bed-fellows. Every morning I brushed them from my clothes like so much dust, and yet carried a few score about with me in my daily walks. If, forgetfully, I put a piece of chocolate or a biscuit on my chest-of-drawers, an hour later they swarmed over it, as did the inhabitants of Lilliput over Gulliver. There were cracks in my plastered wall, which must have harboured thousands of the animals, and I have watched their never-ceasing procession towards the floor or the ceiling, like a black thread suspended down the side of the room, at all hours of the day.

I suppose the winter-time is bad for spiders, else surely I should have seen many fine live specimens of this useful, though ugly creature. But there was a certain outhouse in connection with the villa where I was staying, which I shall always think of with as much respect as



I feel for the completest natural history collection of the civilised world. This building was at the end of a wooden pier running out a little way into the river, where it was alternately well saturated with the mists of the night and well baked by the sun during the day. I used to enter it tremulously, lest I should shake down a mammoth spider, with a body an inch long, and thick, hairy legs, who I knew had a trick of locating just over the threshold. Nor was I less careful about my steps, for there were shapely rats, and fine, glistening, chestnut-coloured roaches, who had an almost undisturbed sovereignty of the boards. Once inside, however, it was possible to sit down on something clean, in a spot over which insects were not suspended, and look round with comparative tranquillity. The roof and sides of the house were of pine boards, ill cemented, and well rotted by damp and heat, and in every corner, in every crevice, webs were spun, and inhabited by either the living or the dead. Such a collection of dry-sucked skeletons I have never seen anywhere else. In some cases the spiders had died in their webs, and their awe-inspiring bodies fluttered hither and thither in the breeze that blew from the river through the crevices in the sides. But one could appreciate their dreadfulness in life after watching one of them, still alive—very much alive, in fact—stalk, ensnare, and then carry off to his innermost den, with as much ease as you or I might carry a loaf of bread, a gigantic, garbage-fed bluebottle. The bite of these formidable monsters is said to prove as fatal as that of a rattlesnake, at times; but it is in mercy that they are gifted with a spirit so lethargic that they are not disposed to be violently offensive, or even ordinarily active, except at their dinner-time.

The buzzard, which is a noticeable bird throughout Florida, wherever two or three houses are found together, is worthy of a few words, though these birds may not come under the heading of pests. Indeed, the buzzard is a pest only in so much as he is a scavenger, and, like the human scavenger, he is unsavoury in himself and by association, rather than a doer of evil. He does as much in his way to stave off pestilence as the doctor in his way. Quickly as a Florida sun will generate corruption, the buzzard has an eye and a nostril that will be beforehand with the sun. On a fine day the birds are to be seen hovering high over the city, and if one or other of

them gradually lowers himself, his mighty wings getting more and more measurable, and then suddenly, with a swoop, comes somewhere to the ground, depend upon it he has got some prey. The niggers universally seem to have a veneration for the birds, which may be noticed strutting about their back premises, preying here and there, with all that sense of proprietorship which is so remarkable in the farmyard chanticleer. They would rather kill a rude white man than a buzzard, were it not for the consequences. I was one day going by mail-car from a little settlement called Tarpon Springs, on the Gulf Coast, to Tampa—the “Espiritu-Santa” of three and a half centuries ago—through almost untroubled pine-forests, when we passed a long, white skeleton lying to the left of the track, from which a couple of buzzards rose lazily into the air.

“What’s that?” I asked of the driver.

“Them’s buzzards,” said he, “finishing up old Charlie. Old Charlie was on this stage till t’other day, when he took a sickener of life, and fell down dead as a stone. So I just hysted him off the track and drove on with single horse. That’s all that’s left of Charlie.”

“Oh, Charlie was a horse then?” I said, somewhat relieved; for the bones were but ill shown, and I might, not unreasonably, have taken them for human remains.

“Yes; and a good ‘un till he took to sore shoulders.”

“And so the buzzards have eaten him?”

“Clean as my grandfather’s crown. Rare birds them! I suppose there’s many a meal for them in England, where you come from?”

I explained that buzzards had no part in the economy of English life—astonishing him; for, by his face, he evidently thought the birds were a heavenly arrangement for getting rid of dead bodies all the world over.

“Then what in thunder do you do with your dead horses?” he asked.

As politely as was possible, I told him of the knackers, the saddlers, the cat-meat ladies and gentlemen, all of whom relied very considerably on the carcasses of the animals, and would be sure to feel very wickedly towards the person who introduced buzzards into England, and domesticated them in London.

But the driver had no patience to hear more. He protested strongly that he would not for any consideration live in a country where horseflesh was not consumed

by buzzards, for security's sake, since no one would be likely to kill and eat a buzzard.

True, not so very long ago, so goes the tale, a certain English captain, of a commanding presence, and the reputation of a good sportsman no less than a good soldier, went out shooting in the woods near Jacksonville, and came home with a "splendid wild turkey"—so he called it—slung somewhat ostentatiously over his left shoulder, and took the bird straightway to his cook to be prepared for dinner. The cook was a black wag, who had no conception of the importance of an English Captain; and with a grin on his face—which, no doubt, the Captain, worthy man, took for an appreciative sign of joy, or a humble form of congratulation on his success—promised to cook the bird without fail. To celebrate an anniversary, the Captain had invited certain Jacksonville notables to dinner that day, who, by-the-bye, would have jumped at the wild turkey quite apart from the anniversary. Well, the guests arrived, and the dinner was served, and the black man was seen to withdraw hurriedly with his hand to his nose. Here let the veil be drawn. The rascal had cooked his master's buzzard for his master's guests.

It were a shame in me to forget the mules—the staple quadruped of Jacksonville. They have almost the monopoly of the trams, which they pull laboriously up and down the length of Jacksonville's sandiest street, choosing their own pace, and, as a rule, laughing even at the hide whips which their drivers lay about their flanks as though they were threshing corn. They are a fine breed of animal, and when well-fed remarkably good-looking; not that it is impossible to ill-treat them by any other method than semi-starvation. Though they have thick skins, the poor fellows have their tender parts, like their betters, and none are more ready to appeal thereto than the rascals of niggers who, for their daily occupation, conduct the conveyance of wood to and from the sawmills at one end of the city. These same niggers, moreover, get their wits extraordinarily sharpened by their work. A London 'bus-driver might learn something from them in the expletive line. It is as though human nature develops best or worst—according to your ideal—when in constant friction with the animal nature of quadrupeds. The grey-haired expressman, Joseph, who took my baggage to the railway depôt, said

"Gee up, Bradlaugh!" when his mule was merely pardonably slow in getting along; but when the animal chose to try a standstill in the sand, the better to flick the flies from him, Joseph flew at him with the whip, and smothered him in strong adjectives. I asked Joseph who Bradlaugh was, but he did not know. He said "Gee up, Bradlaugh!" because a "wideawake young feller" from New York said it to his mules, and found it answer.

This subject of the diffusion of ideas reminds me that when I was at Cedar City, a bustling little Florida seaport on the Gulf of Mexico, renowned for its oysters, I was amused by hearing a parcel of nigger-boys engaged in wrapping oranges in tissue-paper, and boxing them for the northern markets, singing *Over the Garden Wall*, and singing it well, as though the song were no recent importation. These same young reprobates were well filled with comic songs, for they kept their throats at work for an hour, constantly varying the burden of the song. One of their choruses struck me as very adequately illustrative of their dispositions and morals as portrayed by their actions and in their countenances: "I don't care a darn what I do." It was worth something to see the small sinners leer at each other as this most immoral of lines slipped glibly and melodiously from their tongues, and struck dumb with admiration of their recklessness and heroism, a band of little black lasses, who had been chattering on the pier-head above them.

Hotel life in Jacksonville is a decided luxury, and like all luxuries is costly. But Jacksonville without its hotels would be a London shorn of Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's, or an Edinburgh destitute of its castle. Such magnificent buildings as the St. James's Hotel, forming one whole side of a very fair square, planted with orange and other trees; as the Carleton House, Everetts, and others, with their close thoughtfulness of the well-being and comfort of their guests, their display of electric illumination after sunset, their provision of music and other entertainments, and above all, perhaps, their most appetising menus, are fit dwellings for the Jay Goulds, the Disstones, the Carnegies, and other such millionaires. But in spite of all a manager can do to drive dull care from his house, and to lighten its atmosphere, existence must grow somewhat heavy on the hands of the habitués of these places. A breakfast, as ponderous as you please, cannot, even with

the help of a Jacksonville Times-Union, last longer than a couple of hours. Then an hour may be pleasantly passed under the verandah outside on two or three chairs at the same time. After this, a stroll through the city to discover the latest thing in fruits, or to execute a transaction by telegram, will fill up the day till dinner, which—happy time—may be stretched from two till four. Then, what with toothpick-chewing, and orange-eating, plus a little conversation, the rest of the afternoon and the evening till supper-time may be killed. After supper the ladies will want a modicum of gentlemen's society, and, moreover, will let no false modesty stand in the way of their satisfaction in this matter. They will invade the common room, and look very pleasant, while the half-a-dozen musicians in a corner are playing a symphony at sixes-and-sevens, and after the music will talk to you, if you seem worthy of the effort and likely to appreciate it. And then you will go to bed.

There is little home-life in America, we are told. It is said to be a science which American ladies think it beneath them to study; and, whether or not this be their view of the question, it is certainly a science which requires a very great deal of very judicious study before it can be turned to profitable account. But it is no less true that two are necessary for a quarrel, than that a home cannot well exist without the co-operation of at least two human beings, and whether it be a home in the real sense of the word depends on whether or not the co-operating parties are willing to sink their own individualities to some extent for the common benefit. It is this, it seems, that the American lady, no less than the American gentleman, is reluctant to do. The lady is loth to lose the title of "woman of the world," and the gentleman is quite as obstinately determined to remain a man among men rather than to decline (as he will regard it) into the position of a frequenter of drawing-rooms. They both yearn so strongly for public life, that they let private life slip altogether out of their ideal. For a moment I was struck dumb one day by seeing a lady with a cigarette (unlighted) in her mouth, exchanging morning salutation with another lady, who was walking up and down Carleton House promenade with a toothpick between her lips. But such an exhibition is characteristic, and quite accordant with the views

of a woman's rights current in the States. It also helps to show that the most advanced school of manners is sure to be represented in Jacksonville during the winter season.

The man who comes to Jacksonville to see orange-trees makes a mistake. During the season, indeed, he may see many oranges, which for size and quality cannot easily be surpassed, in the shops in Bay Street. But for the trees he must go elsewhere—a degree farther south, for instance. The specimens that line the thoroughfares are not satisfactory trees. They have a town look, and half the fruit on them is either abortive or never matures. Besides, they suffer from the cold in winter, and, if weakly, die. It is a gracious and harmless delusion for a rich man to buy an acre or two of land in the neighbourhood of the city, and, having built him a wooden house, to plant what he pleases to call a "grove" round about his dwelling. If it does little else, it will foster the imagination into longing to behold a real healthy and fruity grove; and the hundreds of red and green, all but stillborn fruit which day by day drop from his trees, will help to fatten his land, at the worst. No, the trees for which Jacksonville may take pride to herself are the live oaks, the one or two magnolias, and the fruits outside her boundaries—though the live oaks easily take the first place. These grand fellows keep their leaves fresh and green throughout the winter, and give a warm look to the city even when there is a frosty glaze on the ground. They drop a leaf now and then, as though to testify that they, no less than we, are but mortal, but, when one leaf goes, another comes. And they merit all the stares of admiration they receive from the newly-arrived Northerners, who troop wearily from the Fernandina railway depot along Bay Street in quest of board and lodging.

These incoming visitors, by-the-bye, are a most curious part of Jacksonville winter life. One would suppose they were all well-to-do people, who could afford to pay the twenty or thirty dollars for their transport from the cold north to the less cold south, people to whom it was indifferent whether they wintered at Jacksonville or Madeira. But it is not so at all. There are at least as many artisans as rich men among the day's quota of arrivals; at least as many hard-working young and middle-aged women of the lower professional classes as of ladies. Here, for example, is a muscular

young fellow, with all his personal effects wrapped up in a red handkerchief, and slung over his shoulder. The doctor has recommended him to escape the winter of New York, and with hardly a moment's thought he decides to take steamer for Florida. It is as easy for an artisan to get work in one city as in another in this active North American continent, and there is the no small possibility that wages are better in Jacksonville than in New York. I have talked with young men of seventeen and eighteen who for three or four years have been accustomed to pass the spring in San Francisco, the summer at some cool watering-place in the Rockies or on Long Island, the autumn at Saratoga, returning invariably to Jacksonville for the winter, thereby seeing a good deal of what is called "life," ascertaining where the main chance can best be pursued, and gaining a most remarkable degree of self-reliance and independence, not to add considerable impudence. One lad of nineteen; who served as waiter in a Jacksonville hotel, "taught school" in the Far West, and took up printing when his fancy led him to New York; was inclined to be patronising to me because I was a Britisher. "Couldn't abide being pent up in that bit of an island of yours," he said. This youth had, a day or two before, bought a hundred acres of land in Central Florida with some of his savings. He guessed by the time he was back at Jacksonville he would be selling it for twice what it cost him. From sheer curiosity I asked the boy where his home was. "Home!" said he; "this is it. The old folks are still at Brownville, I guess; but I ain't got no time to go messing seeing after them. They let me loose one day, and I'll leave 'em loose, just to play fair. What'll you drink?"

These young Americans, with little education, except what comes to them instinctively and experimentally, are as anxious to get out of the nest and seek work on their own account as the most impetuous of young birds; and, once set going, they are to all appearances as indifferent to their parents as the young birds are. I suppose, however, they cannot readily crush the emotional part of them, and that their frequent invitation to strangers to have a drink is but filial affection asserting itself by a wrong channel.

Among the other arrivals, there is generally one man a day who hoves to live

through the winter by his wits. He is either a polypathic, a national, or a universal healer; or he will let you into a secret which will make your fortune—it has made his, and he transfers it out of kindly feeling for humanity—for the ridiculous sum of fifty cents. Likely enough he invests all his capital in a half-column advertisement in the Jacksonville paper, then takes an office on trust, and waits for the silly men and women who are ever ready to be deceived. Gentlemen with rheumatic cures do well among the coloured populace—and the more eloquently mendacious they are, the more certainly is success assured to them. I saw a nigger one day borrow a dollar from a friend, when they had both listened to a wordy declaration of the merits of a certain medicine which was being sold in the open air by a gentleman in a white hat—there is a great deal in the colour of the hat—mounted on an empty beer-barrel. The friend gave the other a dollar, but expostulated. "Why, you ain't got none of them complaints, have you?" "Not as I knows on," said the borrower, who by this had found his dollar, and got his bottle; "but he spoke so fine, and didn't you hear him say, 'One's sure to have 'em when one gets old'?" At this, the compliant friend looked rather glum, possibly fearing lest payment of the dollar should be postponed until the borrower became senile; but the moral is one which Yankee quacks know by heart.

Lastly, as indicative in some slight measure of the state of morals in Jacksonville, I would say that most religious denominations are represented in the city, and that one may go from the Jewish synagogue in one street to the most distant nigger conventicle amid the scrub in the suburbs without hearing anything suggestive of a spirit of bigotry. I heard a sermon from the rabbi at the synagogue which might have come from the Episcopal Church pulpit without exciting surprise or suspicions of dangerous latitudinarianism. And when the parson of the Episcopal Church heard that Père Hyacinthe was making a visit to Jacksonville, he kindly offered him his church for an entire Sunday, with all the money he could get by the collection. The Père was not likely to refuse such a chance, and he preached two very lengthy sermons in the most expressive, terse, and mellifluous French it has ever been my good fortune to hear. As for the congregations at these services, they

were tremendous, though five minutes of the sermon and observation of the refined attitude and gestures of the cultured Frenchman were as much as could be borne without fidgeting. When half an hour had passed, and Père Hyacinthe seemed as far from concluding as when he began, many of the gentlemen could stand it no longer, and left the church—not without contributing something at the door, as counterpoise for their apparent discourtesy.

It might be objected by some that the musical part of the Episcopal Church services in Jacksonville are conducted a little too theatrically. A finely-dressed young lady will, for example, sing a solo face to face with the congregation, her music—which she does not look at—held most artistically, and her mouth a studied and elegant oval, while with her eyes she ranges freely over the countenances of the ladies and gentlemen before her. But as this lady is gifted with a sweet voice, and a not un-beautiful face, I, myself, have nothing to say against the exhibition. Everyone follows his or her inclination as to sitting or standing during the service; the rubric is here, verily, a dead letter. But then, it may be said, they are mostly invalids wintering in Jacksonville for their health, and one ought not to be hypercritical in a place of worship. Granted readily, and it is just the piquant combination of a busy, money-making place, with its hotels and boarding-houses full of people who surrender themselves to the sway of whims and fancies, which makes sunny, blue-skied Jacksonville so delightful a wintering-place. It is a place where everyone may follow his bent unrestrainedly, and, if for no other reason than this, deserves to grow in popularity year by year.

### PRINCESSES IN THE PAST.

#### IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

THE marriage of the youngest of the Queen's daughters seems to end a chapter in the history of the royal line—a history that is of some importance to others besides courtiers and genealogists. For as a thread of mingled colours and substance—now bright, now tarnished—so run the lives of the ruling race through the web of national life. The throngs that lined the sunny, dusty roads of the Isle of Wight to catch a glimpse of the bridal-train testify to the loving interest still felt in the domestic events of the family that continues the race of our

Plantagenets, Tudors, and Stuarts, while the sympathetic flutter that thrills the general female bosom is increased by the knowledge that reasons of state are no longer concerned in the matter; and that here, at all events, is a marriage of inclination and not of policy.

We may well contrast this happy marriage, which rather gives the mother a son than takes away a daughter, with other marriages, not so happy perhaps, where royal Princesses have been the brides—sometimes unwilling, often indifferent, but rarely, till now, with that full personal regard for their intended mates which is the chief ingredient in a perfect marriage.

We are a long way now from the time when the marriage of a Princess was an affair of general moment, in which every member of the community felt an interest—when conduits ran with wine, and all the bells of all the churches rang out with merry clangour; when the abbey was hung with crimson and gold, and everyone who came was feasted as of right in the King's hall; when the utmost amount of bluff, hilarious festivity was extracted from the practice of the old popular customs that followed and plagued the blushing bride even into the nuptial chamber. But if the old jollity and fellowship are gone, the cruel indifference is also gone which consigned the Princess, tenderly reared and cared for, to the clutch of some stranger—an unkind and, perhaps, elderly chieftain—to be carried off into strange lands and among unknown peoples, quite irrespective of any will of her own in the matter.

But while serious historians confine their attention to the ruling powers, and do not concern themselves with the joys and sorrows of the younger branches, and while even the writers of lighter and less laborious compilations draw the line at those within direct succession to the throne, the story of the loves and marriages of the younger daughters of the realm still remains unwritten. There are Princesses, indeed, who have altogether escaped notice.

Who is prepared dogmatically to testify, for instance, about the daughters of William the Conqueror, how many he had or whom they married?—to say nothing of the Saxon Princesses of the line of Cerdic, a long and indistinctly-written list—fair creatures with their lint-white locks, charming in themselves, but, as wives, rather a doubtful possession. They had a way of flying to convents or enveloping themselves

in a quite inconsistent celibacy. The spouse might be loving, his hall warm and well-provided, yet the bride had no thought for the love of human spouse—

But kept cold distance, and did thence remove,  
To spend her living in eternal love.

Or if the woman were not all ice, she was all fire, passion, and revenge, and ready to sheathe a dagger in the heart of rival or of neglectful lover.

But to have married a daughter of the Conqueror! He must have been a bold man who came a-wooing in that family. Faultlessly reared, according to the traditions of the age, were these damsels, in almost cloistral seclusion, expending their young fancies in spinning flax or in worsted work—at least in such equivalent of worsted work as was existent in that dim age—promoted from the sampler to the web in which the history of their time should be expounded in cross-stitch.

How many there were of these patient spinsters and embroiderers who clustered about their mother's, stern Matilda's, chair—who can say with certainty, or who can record their fates? Was Gundreda one of them? that daughter of the Conqueror, whose bones were found thirty or forty years ago among the ruins of the once stately abbey of Lewes, which her husband, De Warenne, had founded. Brown, of the Archaeological Society, says she was not, and hints at scandals that threw a ray of interest on that distant period; while Jones, of the Antiquarians, is equally certain that she was of the right royal line, and that the numerous descendants she left in private families of more or less distinction are entitled, if not to a quartering, at least to a lozenge, or a label, or some other heraldic device with the lion or leopard of England exhibited thereon.

In those early days, indeed, there was not that rigid adherence to genealogical limits which the policy of the ruling families of Europe has since imposed on its members. William the Conqueror no doubt owed something of the rude force of his nature and the stern common-sense that was his great characteristic, to the lineage of the tanner of Falaise. And the Plantagenets, if tradition is to be credited, inherited the fire of their nature from a still more extraordinary source. The father of Geoffrey Plantagenet wedded a wife, writes an old chronicler, "only for her beauty. He wist not whence she came, nor of what kindred she was. Seldom

would she come to church, but never abide the sacre"—or consecration of the Host—"and when this was noted of her husband, one day he bade four of his knights that they should hold her to her place through the mass. And this they did; but a little before the sacre she flew from them out of the window, and the children that were on her left hand she bore with her, and the others on her right she left behynde her. King Richard was wont to say, with reference to his strange great-grandmother, that no wonder they that came of such kindred were each contrary to the other"—adding, with a cheerful indifference to the future of himself and kindred, that they were all destined to return to the place whence they had come. Certainly all the Plantagenets had a considerable spice of the presumed maternal ancestry about them—of this Princess of the House of Darkness; but such share as may have fallen to their descendants has been so far mixed and diluted, as no longer to form an objectionable element.

The Plantagenets, it will be remembered, owed their title to the English crown to marriage with a Princess, a titular Empress, indeed, although her first marriage to the Emperor of the period seems to have been more formal than real. Anyhow, the Emperor, it is said, put her away, not for her fault, but from a desire to assume the hermit's cowl. This desire, according to the same monkish tradition, he accomplished in the neighbourhood of Chester, where he occupied the cell left vacant by Harold Infelix.

There are missing Princesses, too, among the daughters of Henry the Second, whose wife, the fair and jealous Eleanor, brought him six noble daughters, of whom only three are fully accounted for. These three, however, established for themselves a footing in history, by marrying Kings or reigning Dukes, the most important being the marriage of Matilda to Henry the Lion, one of the powerful and prolific race of Guelfs, from whom spring our present royal family. The story of a Countess of the house of Guelf, who had as many children as there are days of the year, three of whom were born together in a year of our Lord unknown, may be put aside as a humorous exaggeration. But the son of an English Princess and the Guelf became the first Duke of Brunswick, a title which, after all these centuries of existence, seems likely to be merged in the possessions of the Hohenzollerns.

We are not certain, either, whether all King John's daughters have been duly accounted for. They were children at their much-abused father's death, and the duty of marrying them to good advantage fell upon their brother, Henry the Third, who found a husband for the eldest in the Scotch king, Alexander the Second, while the youngest made a more brilliant, but hardly more fortunate match with the Emperor Frederick the Second. The intermediate daughter pleased herself by marrying a subject, the rising and powerful Earl of Pembroke, to whom, however, the alliance brought only evil fortune. The Barons resented the match extremely. The King had wasted a Princess, by permitting her to marry one of their order, when she might have been utilised in obtaining an ally abroad. Anyhow, the Earl was murdered some two years after his marriage, and his widow bestowed herself in the most hasty and inconsiderate manner upon Simon de Montfort, the famous champion of the aristocratic, as opposed to the royal, party.

Of Henry's own daughters by Eleanor of Provence, the elder married her cousin, Alexander of Scotland, while the younger, whose name, Beatrice, excites some interest in this connection, was bestowed upon John, Duke of Bretagne. This latter was a marriage which seems to have been happy enough during the short time it lasted, but Beatrice, after bringing her husband sundry children, died at an early age.

Another generation now appears, and the little group of Princesses, the children of Edward the First, and his faithful, much-loved wife, Eleanor. Of these only Joan excites our interest—Joan, who was born at Acre, while husband and wife were there crusading for the Holy Land. This young woman had a fair share of the wilful character of the Plantagenets, without their over-weening pride, and after her first marriage, a sufficiently suitable match, with Gilbert, Earl of Gloucester, she married her deceased husband's squire or steward, Ralph Monthermer. Such a thing was then deemed monstrous, unheard-of, that a Princess of the royal house should marry a simple squire, and those about the King proposed to punish the audacious fellow with a traitor's doom. But the stout squire had carried himself so bravely in the Scottish wars that the King forgave him, and we may hope that the pair lived happily ever after. "A ful holy woman was the lady of Acre"—so writes one of the

chroniclers, though his chief reason for the statement was that the body of the Princess was found in a perfect state fifty-two years afterwards. She was buried in the Church of the "Frères Austines" at Clare, in Suffolk, which is, or was recently, used as a barn.

The unhappy Edward the Second had two daughters, the younger of whom was Joan, who was given in marriage by her brother, the third Edward, to David, King of Scotland, and was derisively nicknamed by the Scots, Joan Makerpeace. An honourable title we should think it now, but scarcely so regarded by the Scot of the period. Joan took with her to Scotland, as part of her dower, the regalia of Scotland, still proudly exhibited in Edinburgh Castle, but she did not take back the coronation stone which her brother had promised to restore, but which the English people preferred should remain in Westminster Abbey. But the black cross of Scotland went back, the morsel of the true cross which gave its name originally to Holyrood Abbey, and many other valuable relics. The royal bridegroom was only seven years old, and in spite of her title, Princess Joan could have had little peace in her wedded life. After a long exile in France, the young pair came to their kingdom, and Joan saw her husband taken prisoner at the battle of Neville's Cross, after which he remained a captive for eleven years. Nor did any children come to bless the union, and thus the house of Bruce came to an end, and the Stuarts grasped the uneasy crown of Scotland.

Of the five little Princesses who came to Edward the Third and Philippa, we hear very little. There were plenty of stout sons, who promised to place the Plantagenet race beyond the fear of extinction, and thus the future of the daughters of the house became of less national moment. Their history may be dug in fragments out of wardrobe accounts, or be found lurking in pipe-rolls—here a dry bone, as it were, and there a stray lock of hair from once abundant tresses, as when an old tomb is explored, but little else. The heroine of the period is Countess Joan, the fair Maid of Kent, the King's cousin and the daughter of that Earl of Kent who was treacherously led into the toils of his enemies at Corfe Castle. This royal lady's wedding adventures are rather curious. No longer was the Princess of the period brought up in seclusion and cloistered simplicity. Young Countess Joan, m:

over rich—for the Earldom of Kent was worth little more than forty pounds a year, and other possessions had been escheated—and altogether rather a waif and stray among Princesses, had been brought up in the household of William Montague, Earl of Salisbury. And here she met a fine young fellow, one of the Earl's household, Thomas Holand, of a Lancashire family, not in any way distinguished, who fell deeply in love with fair Joan, and persuaded her to some form of betrothal which the indiscreet young couple persuaded themselves was as good as a formal marriage. Presently Holand was called away to the French wars, where he signalised himself greatly, especially at Cressy, where he had chief command in the van of Prince Edward's army, and while he was away, Joan, who, with her beauty and bonhomie, had a fair share of fickleness and of freedom of manner, was persuaded by the Earl of Salisbury to contract herself to him.

So when Sir Thomas Holand returned with all his honours upon him and full of lover-like ardour, he found his young wife actually the wife of another—and a very powerful other—who decidedly refused to part with her. Sir Thomas, however, appealed to the ecclesiastical courts, and finally to the Pope, who gave judgment in his favour, with restitution of conjugal rights: a judgment in which the Earl finally acquiesced, and Joan, who was ready to be the spoil of the victor, whosoever he might be, returned contented to her first love. Both Holand and the fair Joan were in high favour with the Black Prince, and the former soon had assigned to him sufficient honours and revenues. He was made Lieutenant and Captain-General of the Dukedom of Brittany, with full possession of all the revenues of the duchy, and, afterwards, also Governor of the Channel Islands, with other charges and trusts of importance. Sir Thomas died leaving Joan still young and handsome, and she presently married the Black Prince, who had long been enamoured of his cousin, and, as everybody knows, she became the mother of Richard the Second. Her children by Holand were raised to the highest honours in the English peerage, and scandal of recent days has made free with her character and that of her husband, and attributed the extraordinary favours he received to unworthy causes. But Joan, before she died, gave directions that she should be buried by the side of her first

husband—a silent and potent testimony in her favour as a faithful wife.

With the rise to power of the House of Lancaster, we see traces of a more politic and cunning hand in the disposal of the royal Princesses. They were no longer wasted, but their alliances were made to serve the turns of foreign policy. One of Henry the Fourth's daughters married Louis of Bavaria, the Elector Palatine, and another was sent in one of the King's ships to Denmark, to marry the King, who was but a small youth, and still under his mother's tutelage. But here occurs a considerable hiatus in Princesses. The cruel broils of the Wars of the Roses intervene, and at last we come to a royal Princess—Elizabeth, the last direct representative of the House of York—who, in her youth and inexperience, was selected to marry the chilly valetudinarian, King Henry the Seventh.

And now we are at length clear of the Middle Ages, and may walk in the light of full and contemporary records. The old times are finished—the days of great feasts, great jousts, tourneys, “daunsynge, carolyngs,” when a royal wedding was feasted with great joy and triumphs. The pageantry and some of the brilliance of the old régime still continue, an echo of the horn of Roncesvalles; but it is an echo only. The old world has passed away, and brave new creatures walk the earth—lords and ladies in silken attire, and princesses with their splendid trains.

## CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

### MONMOUTHSHIRE.

As we cross the Severn by the steam-ferry to Portsoken, in Monmouthshire, the names of the shoals which occupy so much of the river-bed, known as Welsh ground and Welsh banks, show that, in popular estimation, the county we are about to enter is really a part of Wales. Indeed, it was not until the reign of Henry the Eighth that Monmouth became—as far as the King's council could make it so—an English county. Even then the district remained under the jurisdiction of Welsh judges, and the county was actually brought under the English jurisprudence in the time of Charles the Second, when it was united to the Oxford Circuit; while the anomalous and irregular jurisdiction of the Lords Marches was only finally



abolished in the first year of the reign of William and Mary.

The ferry itself is not without historical interest. Here, no doubt, was the Traiectus of the Roman itinerary, and ferry-boats passed to and fro, while the sunshine flashed on the helmets of the Roman legionaries, and glittered on their bright accoutrements. Saxon chiefs, too, in their barbaric bravery, thronged across as they followed their Lord Harold to the wars against the Welsh. Harold himself built a palace at Portskewet, and there entertained the Confessor when he held his court at Gloucester. And yet, the ferry is called the New Passage!

The New Passage, in fact, owes its name to a strange incident in the Civil Wars. It was towards the close of the contest—Naseby had been fought and lost by the King, who, having found a precarious refuge at Raglan Castle, was moving hither and thither, closely pursued by his enemies—that one day the ferrymen were hailed by a horseman, accompanied by two or three attendants, whose horses showed by their condition that they had been ridden far and fast. The boatmen recognised the King, and hastened to get out the great horse-boat, and then ferried across the little cavalcade to the English shore. The tide was low and the channel narrow, the great sandbanks were high and dry; and the boatmen pointed out that time would be saved by landing on the bank called the English stones, whence the King and his suite could ride across to the shore without danger. The King thanked the men, rewarded them royally, and rode away.

Hardly had the ferrymen returned to their station on the Portskewet side, when a troop of Parliament horse, eighteen or so in number, rode up in hot pursuit, and shouted roughly to the men to get ready their boats. The boatmen made difficulties and objections, doing all they could to gain time; but the leader of the band drew his sword, and swore that he would cut them down if they hesitated or made the least delay. The boatmen sullenly drew up their boats, and took on board their unwelcome passengers—thus hot upon the King's trail.

By this time the tide had turned and the fierce floodtide of the Severn sea was showing itself in whirls and patches here and there; but the shoals were still high above the water, although the boatmen well knew that in a few minutes' time the tide

would be running like a millstream between the shoals and the shore. But the ferrymen ran their boat on the English stones, and mutely intimated that now the voyage was ended. There, indeed, on the margin of the now rushing waters were the fresh hoof-marks of the horses of the fugitives. The Roundheads hastily landed, and rode off across the shoal, and the ferrymen pushed off and rowed away.

There is no fiercer tide along all the English shore than that which rushes twice a day up the Severn sea. The wide mouth of the estuary, opening towards the great tidal-wave that swirls across the broad Atlantic, gathers the rush of waters which dash up the narrower throat of the channel with the westerly gale, rising as they go in a bore or wall of waters several feet in height. And thus the fate of the unhappy troopers was quickly sealed—in front of them a swift channel now quite impassable, behind them the foaming tide. There was a shout of rage and despair, a struggle in the foaming waves, and then all was silent, not a man escaping to bear witness to the treachery of the ferrymen.

Such is the story as it was told, when it was safe to tell it; but it seems that at the time, the loss of the detachment was attributed to accident, like the loss of a troop of cavalry in crossing a ford during the Afghan war. So, by the order of General Cromwell, the ferry was abolished as dangerous, and, when it was once more opened, a century or so later, it was called the New Passage.

About here the coast of Monmouth is low and flat, giving little promise of the charming scenery of the interior. These marshes are known as Caldecott and Wentloog levels, and are held against the sea and its tides by walls and banks of ancient date, the whole being kept in order and regulated under the laws of Romney Marsh, the type and model of such amphibious jurisprudence.

Perhaps the pleasantest way of entering the county is by steamer from Bristol, with glimpses of the Welsh mountains in passing up the river, and ending the voyage at pleasant Chepstow, on the Wye, from which the golden valley gradually unfolds itself in scenes of soft luxuriant beauty—with Tintern on the way embosomed in woods, sweetest and most romantic of all the ruined abbeyes.

Chepstow, with its noble castle welded to the perpendicular cliff that rises from the brink of the river, has many points of

interest. In one of the round towers of the castle is shown the chamber where Henry Martyn, the regicide, was imprisoned for twenty years. Martyn surrendered under the royal proclamation, and thus saved his life; and his imprisonment was not of a very rigorous nature. His wife was allowed to live with him, and he had his own servants, while he might even visit his friends in the neighbourhood with the escort of a warder. Then there are fragments of the old walls of the town, and an ancient gateway, with pleasant, cheerful streets.

Chepstow is said to have been originally built of the materials of the old Roman station known as Caerwent, that stands a few miles to the westward, with the foundations of its enclosing walls still to be traced. In Leland's time, "the places where the four gates was yet appare, and the most part of the wal yet stonde, but al to minischyd and torn." The whole space is now occupied by small enclosures and cottages, and is hardly to be distinguished from the country around it. But we may follow the Roman road to Caerleon—the camp or fort of the legion—pleasantly placed in a bend of the river Uak, a few miles above Newport. And here there are still towers and fragments of walls remaining, to testify to the ancient importance of the place, now a mere village, but once the provincial capital of *Britannia secunda*, with its public buildings, palaces, and temples. Here were the headquarters of the second Augustan Legion, as numerous monuments and inscriptions remain to testify. Many of the remains recovered from the earth are scattered up and down, in various museums and private collections; but an excellent museum has now for some years existed in the village, rich with interesting relics of Roman and mediæval times.

All this country between the Uak and the Wye formed the Welsh principality of Gwent, a country noted for its corn and honey. This principality, which, no doubt, was once far more extensive, and included the whole valley of the Wye and Severn, was, in the latter days of its Welsh rulers, divided into two parts, one "above the wood," and the other "below the wood." This wood still exists to the northward of the two Roman stations, and retains the ancient name of the principality as Wentwood. Although now sadly shrunk within its once extensive limits, that famous forest of Wentwood contained six castles, of which Caldecott was the chief. still a noble

ruin towering over the marshy flat around. Nowadays the mantle of the Welsh Princes, as well as of the Norman Barons, seems to have fallen on the house of Beaufort, for woods, castles, mansions, wherever you go, all seem to belong to the noble Duke of that ilk, who, it may be said, is no churlish guardian of the treasures of antiquity.

The land of Gwent was one of the first to tempt the cupidity of the Norman Barons, when they were fairly settled in the Saxon land, and everywhere they pushed their way through the fertile, open country, appropriating the dues and tributes of the Welsh Princes, and imposing other feudal burdens, but not to any extent expropriating the proprietors of the soil or interfering much with their laws and customs. But everywhere they built strong castles to overawe their new tenants, as well as to check the inroads of the fighting Welshmen from the hills. Against the strong castles and warlike engines of the Normans the Welshmen bit and fought in vain, although at times, when some wrong or grievance stirred their hearts, and their bards lashed them to madness with stinging words, they would pour over the land with fierce, irresistible rush.

Such a thing happened in the reign of Henry the Second when Owain, the son of Caradoc, was treacherously slain by the King's soldiers from Newport, and his father and younger brother raised the country, and devastated the English land to the gates of Hereford and Gloucester; and again, when the third Henry invaded the Welsh borders, and the hardy mountaineers swept him back to his fortified camp about Grosmont Castle, and then surprised the royal troops, and carried off a splendid loot—five hundred horses, baggage-waggons loaded with supplies, and much treasure of various kinds. For the Cymro, like the Gael, fought magnificently till his sack was full of plunder, and then his only thought was how to get back to his nest among the hills and exhibit his prize to his admiring womankind.

But in all these raids and invasions the Normans, in their strong castles, kept their grip upon the land; and most of these strongholds, which became useless when the Welshmen became reconciled to the rule of the English Kings, have left fine and extensive ruins, so that Monmouthshire is richer, perhaps, than any other district in England in these relics of military architecture. There is Aber-

gavenny Castle, founded by Hameline Balun, one of the Conqueror's barons, who had annexed the district of Upper Gwent, and which came, after many changes, into the hands of the De Braose family, of which was that William who was the lover of Llewellyn's wife. Llewellyn, it is said, discovered the intrigue, and made short work of William by hanging him to the nearest tree, and then went to his wife, and asked tauntingly what she would give to see her William.

"Wales, and England, and Llewellyn,  
I'd give them all to see my William,"

replied the woman, in a burst of passion, when her husband drew her to the window and pointed out her William dangling in the air. It was one of the De Braoses, too, who gave a great banquet to all the Welsh chiefs of the country round, and during the feast ordered the gates to be shut, and then fell upon his guests with his men-at-arms, and made an end of them. Treachery and murder, indeed, were familiar to the old castle, whose blood-stained walls, in picturesque ruin, still overhang the river Usk, while the old borough, once walled and fortified, has still an old town gate and other relics to show of its ancient state. The barony of Abergavenny, it may be noted, is one of the few that are still held by tenure, the possession of the old ruined walls of the castle giving the title to the peerage.

Under the walls of the castle stood an old priory of Benedictines, a cell to the monastery of St. Vincent, in Mons; and the priory church is now the church of the parish, with a fine collection of mediæval monuments—of knights who fell in the Wars of the Roses, or fought at Agincourt, with old and battered effigies of earlier but nameless warriors.

To the north, among the Black Mountains, stood a solitary tower, an outpost among the hills, which has given its name to the village of Oldcastle, the latter the birthplace of the famed Sir John, of Lollard fame; while, within hail of Abergavenny—at least, where a horse might gallop in an hour—stands the nearest of a strong triangle of castles.

Three castles fayre are in a goodly ground.

White Castle, at the western apex of the figure, belonged to the Conqueror's Earl of Hereford, to the Cantalupes and De Braoses, but it came into the possession of the Crown in the reign of Henry the Third, and was passed on to the Duchy of Lancaster, to which its ruins still belong.

The second of these castles is Grosmont, upon the bend of the little river Monnow, which has left some interesting remains. The castle was often attacked by the Welsh, and the whole district is rich with legends of these combats. From Craig Hill close by, Owen Glyndwr was driven by Prince Hal. Grosmont, indeed, had long been a favourite seat of the house of Lancaster, and the Prince's great-grandfather had been known as Henry Grosmont; for here he was born, and here probably also was born Blanche, the Prince's grandmother, who brought all the honours and possessions of the Earldom of Lancaster to John of Gaunt, her husband.

The triangle is completed by Skenfrith, lower down the river Monnow, a plain and early stronghold, with curtain walls and flanking towers. Then a small post half-way to Monmouth, a strongly fortified town, was protected by a fort that has left its name of Newcastle to the village. The district hereabouts is—or used to be—noted as eminently fairy-ground. A barrow in the neighbourhood was the resort of troubled spirits, a famous oak has for centuries been the object of superstitious reverence, and a fairy well of wondrous efficacy still pours forth its limpid stream close by.

Following the course of the river Monnow we soon come to Monmouth, pleasantly situated in the fork of the rivers Monnow and Wye, a picturesque and old-fashioned town, with its ancient bridges and its old gateway, still known as the Welsh Gate. The old castle is but a broken ruin, but the corner in which Henry the Fifth was born is still pointed out. The original Norman castle was rased to the ground by Simon de Montfort, who had taken it from his rival the Earl of Gloucester, and the older portions of the present building are the work of Edward the First's time, when it was assigned to the Duchy of Lancaster, and some of John of Gaunt's work can no doubt be traced. Now it has come into the hands of the Beauforts, and the castle-house was built out of the materials of the old castle by someone of that family in the year 1673. Most of Gaunt's buildings are of the red grit-stone of the neighbourhood, and as John was not accustomed to stint himself for room, there are many vestiges of his work to be found scattered about stables and out-houses in the vicinity, with cellars under old houses, and remains of crypts, all which

testify to the ancient extent and importance of the castle.

Once upon a time there was a manufacture of caps at Monmouth, and, if Fluellen be correct in his quotation of the chronicles, his countrymen wore these caps at the battle of Cressy, "If your majesties is remembered of it"—of the passage in the chronicles, that is, "the Welshmen did goot service in a garden where leeks did grow, wearing leeks in their Monmouth caps." And Fuller, in his chapter on Monmouth, gives an account of the manufacture, from which it seems that these were felted woollen caps—flat, and in form resembling the "beret" still worn by the fishermen on the Norman coast. The business was ruined, it is said, by a visitation of the plague, and the manufacture transferred to Bewdley.

Passing out of Monmouth by the Welsh gate and the charming ancient bridge, we are on the highway to Raglan Castle, the stateliest and most interesting ruin, perhaps, in all England. On the way we cross the little brawling river Trothey, which has given its name to Troy House, just below, a mansion built by Inigo Jones, the gardens of which should be of interest to agriculturists as one of the historical centres of modern gardening. William Herbert, who owned the place in the reign of Henry the Eighth, took a great pride and pleasure in his gardens, and was at great pains to introduce new varieties of all kinds. We read that he dispatched two men, Richards and Williams, to France and Flanders, to study horticulture; and these men brought back vegetables and fruit-trees of many improved strains, which, propagated and distributed, established themselves in the gardens and orchards of the west country. From that date Troy House was always noted for its fruit; and when King Charles the First was on a visit at Raglan Castle, Sir Thomas Somerset, who then owned the mansion, took over to his brother, the Earl of Worcester, a great basket full of dishes of most splendid fruit. The Marquis set the dishes before the King with his own hands: "Not from Lincoln that was, or London that is, or York that is to be, but from Troy, most gracious majesty!" Upon which the King answered, with his melancholy smile, "Truly, my lord, I have heard that corn grows where Troy once stood, but I never thought there had grown apricots."

Raglan is no stern, gaunt Norman castle, but a grand mansion as well as a

fortress, with oriels and mullioned windows, and the fragments of saloons and boudoirs among the wreck of walls pierced for arrows, and platforms from which guns have thundered, and machicolated towers, and, crowning all, the Melyn-y-Gwent, the great yellow citadel of Gwent. Herberts and Somersets added to it and embellished it, and at the outbreak of the civil wars the then Marquis of Worcester put it in a thorough state of defence, and, what is more, raised an army to garrison and defend it. Not an army, indeed, which could keep the field against the great levies of the Parliament, but a compact little force of fifteen hundred foot and five hundred horse, all equipped and maintained at the Marquis's sole cost and charge. After skirmishing round about with more or less success, the Marquis shut himself up with his forces in his great castle, and stood a siege very creditably against overwhelming odds, Fairfax, the Parliamentary General, in person directing the attack. At last the Marquis had to surrender on terms, and was sent a prisoner to the Tower of London, and died in captivity. Then the castle was dismantled and plundered, and has never since been inhabited.

From Raglan the road or railway, which we please, leads us on to Usk, on the river of the same name.

A castle there in Oske doth yet remaine,

A seat where kings and princes have been borne.

This castle was once the stronghold of the Mortimers, and then came by inheritance to the House of York, and was the birthplace of sundry Princes of the House of York, among them being, it is said, the future Kings, Edward the Fourth and Richard the Third. There are still considerable remains—shattered walls and ivy-mantled towers standing enclosed in the private grounds of Usk House.

We are now approaching the wilder part of Monmouthshire—a country of bleak, low-crowned mountains and wild plateaus, with sweet, romantic valleys intermingled; with ironworks perched among the crannies of the hills, and mines scattered here and there. Heaps of slag are often found among the hills, showing that iron-ore was extracted in those remote times. The modern iron manufacture began in the reign of Elizabeth, when the ironworks of Kent and Sussex were also in full activity. As the forests disappeared, and charcoal became scarce and dear, the industry declined, and not until coal came into use

for smelting, and the blast-furnace was invented, did the revival of the iron trade begin.

Pontypool may be considered the metropolis of this iron country; a town that began business in the iron way as early as the reign of Charles the Second, when one Thomas Allgood, of Northampton, settled there. Thomas was an inventor and investigator, who discovered the art of varnishing tin plate, so as to imitate—at a long distance it must be owned—the beautiful lacquer of Japan. To him we owe our early tea-trays, our japanned boxes beloved of solicitors, and the blackened tin work that was once known as Pontypool ware. But there is nothing left of all this at Pontypool. Birmingham has gathered these manufactures to itself, and Pontypool ware, along with Abergavenny wigs and Monmouth caps, has descended into the limbo of forgotten arts.

Pontypool owes its new life to the great coal and iron basin on the edge of which it stands, and ironworks in the neighbourhood were founded towards the end of the seventeenth century by Capel Hanbury, whose son, Major Hanbury, was a friend and supporter of Sir Robert Walpole. The Blaenavon Works on the western slope of the Brecon mountain, began operations in 1789, and the famous Nant-y-glo works were founded six years later.

Let us take a glimpse of this same district before the country was transformed by the smoke and dust of coal-mines and ironworks, and when Edmund Jones, dissenting minister, of Aberystwith, published his geographical account of his own parish. This little book was published at Trevecka in 1779, and as its author was then an elderly man, his recollections went back to a period when many of the old soldiers of the civil wars were still in the land. With this preamble, listen to his story of the notable conversion of John James Watkins.

"He was a native of Aberystwith"—not to be confounded with the greater Aberystwith by the sea—"in the Royal army, against the Parliament, and very fierce on that side. In fencing none could stand before him. He dangerously wounded my grandfather, running his sword upon his ribs in a fray. Which a relation of my grandfather hearing of, went with a bill-staff to be revenged upon him; but it was well for them both that he could not be found. For, hear-

ing that a preacher was coming down to preach the Word, John went up the church lane with a sword by his side, intending to kill him. Now, when the preacher met the soldier he took off his hat to him, upon which the soldier said in himself, 'He is a clean-looking man; it is a pity to kill him. I will go and hear him.' And he went to the preaching, and was converted under the sermon, and made a soldier of the Word. But when he saw Sabbath-breakers, as long as he carried a sword he would draw upon them, and drive them away."

Here again is a silhouette of one of the opposite side: "John ap John went into the Army of the Parliament, where he remained until the taking of Raglan Castle. While he was abroad, in Kent or Sussex, a Nonconformist minister there gave him a revival in the way of goodness. He had the strictness of the old Puritans, and wore his beard long, after their manner." And another, of William John Rosser, of whom a firm old Churchwoman said, "If any of the Roundheads ever went to Heaven, William John Rosser went there."

Or let us take a sketch of a female disciple, Alice William Nicholas, who, when her husband behaved roughly towards her, used to say—with exasperating meekness, no doubt—"Well, the people of Israel were delivered at last from under Pharaoh's hand." 'What!' said he, 'dost thou liken me to Pharaoh?' "A man terrible to behold in a passion," added the worthy minister. Then he gives us a short account of his own family; his grandfather, who loved a vain life, and was given to drinking; his father, John Lewis, who, going to some distant church one day with several companions, to hear a famous preacher, "being before time, went according to their manner at home, to play ball in the churchyard; but afterwards took the sermon to heart, and never played ball after." This ball play in the churchyard and by the way was long a favourite custom, the game being of the nature of fives, or a kind of churchyard tennis.

But it is about the superstitions of the county that Mr. Edmund Jones is such a valuable witness. He knows all about the fairies, believes in them implicitly, and discusses them in the following fashion.

"In former times, more than at present, there were frequent appearances of the fairies in Wales. I think as much in the parish of Aberystwith as in any other, and

more than in some. They are, no doubt, evil spirits. Abundance of people saw them and heard their music, which everyone said was low and pleasant, but none could ever learn the tune. Their talk was like many talking together, but the words seldom heard. But to those who did hear, they seemed to dispute much about future events, and about what they were to do. Sometimes they came like dancing companies with music, but often also in the form of funerals. When dancing, they would entice persons into their company, usually for a whole year, as they did to Edmund William Rees, a man I know well, who came back at the year's end, and looked very bad."

Many tales has our minister to tell of the appearance of the fairies to people he knew well, but he also has his own experiences to relate. "For when a very young boy, going with my aunt, Elizabeth Rogers, at the end of a field we were passing, I saw the likeness of a sheep-fold, with the door towards the south, and over the door, instead of a lintel, a dried branch of a hazel-tree, and within the fold a company of many people. Some sitting downward, some going in and coming out, bowing their heads as they passed under the branch—a musician among them, and a fair woman with a high-crowned hat and a red jacket, who made a better appearance than the rest. I still have a pretty clear idea of her white face and well-formed countenance."

There was ae winsome wench and walie !

Tam o' Shanter was not written then, or we might have thought that the minister had his mind on "cutty sark."

## COUNT PAOLO'S RING.

### A SHORT SERIAL STORY.

#### CHAPTER I.

ALL through the sultry summer's day Angela had stood under the shadows of a stone gateway in one of the older streets of Nice, with her basket of flowers by her side. Without, in the narrow street, the sun shone so fiercely that the pavement almost scorched the feet of the passers-by, and even the brown-faced children ceased their play and lay—half exhausted by the heat—idly basking in the sunshine. The gateway led into a square, open space, which had, probably, at some remote period been a garden belonging to one of the great houses which stood empty

and half ruined now on either side. There were two or three orange-trees still remaining; here and there a tall white lily or a brilliant geranium gleamed among the long, coarse grass; and a great vine had crept up the gateway, and hung its twisting tendrils and cool green leaves just above the girl's head.

The sun shone brightly in the street and in the grass-covered court, but there was a cool spot of shade under the wide gateway where the girl stood, and many of the passers-by looked at her, and looked again, and bought a cluster of flowers for the sake of the seller's fair face.

She was a tall girl, dressed in a blue linen frock, with a sailor-collar of lighter blue tied round her fair neck with a loose knot of ribbon, and she wore a hat of some coarse straw, which sheltered her face and dark eyes from the sun. For, although her complexion was exquisitely fair and clear, and the little soft curls which rippled round her forehead, and the long, thick plait which hung down her back to her waist, were of a pale golden tint, the eyes were dark and liquid, and full of hidden fire and passion, and contrasted oddly with the fairness of the skin.

"Italian eyes in an English face," as one lady passing said to her companion, and, for the sake of the fair English face and the memories it recalled, she went back and spoke a few pleasant words to the flower-girl, and added another bunch of flowers to those which already half filled her basket.

Once, too, during the afternoon, a young English artist passed, and, after gazing with delighted eyes at the fair picture before him—the stone gateway, the glimpse of neglected garden beyond, the girl with her proud, beautiful face and her basket of brilliant flowers—hesitated, passed and repassed, and finally approached, and, taking off his hat, stammered an earnest entreaty that mademoiselle would kindly allow him to make a sketch of her. She had looked at him with her beautiful, questioning eyes, and assented gravely; but when, an hour afterwards, the sketch was finished, and the artist, well satisfied with his work, offered her a liberal reward, she coloured, drew up her head proudly, and waved the money aside.

"Monsieur is welcome. My father, too, is an artist," she said, and something in her manner and voice told the Englishman that any further attempt to induce her to accept the money would be useless.

She did not, however, refuse: when

by-and-by he went into a confectioner's, and returned with some white rolls and chocolate and a bunch of grapes; to share his simple meal. She had eaten nothing since morning, and she was tired and faint, and the chocolate and fruit were very refreshing.

Her grave face softened, and her white teeth gleamed, and a sudden brightness came into her great eyes as she smiled and thanked him.

An old crone—a mere bundle of rags with a gaudy handkerchief tied turban-wise round her head—looked at her curiously as the artist turned away.

"Ah, ah! why do you not smile so always, silly one? You would sell twice as many flowers," she said contemptuously. "Bah!"—as the girl frowned and coloured—"who would care to buy from such an unsmiling face?"

The frown deepened on the girl's face. She drew up her head haughtily, and her eyes darkened.

"Why should I smile? I sell flowers, not smiles," she said in a harsh voice.

"You will be ready enough to sell them some day;" and the old woman laughed unpleasantly. "Some day when your roses are faded and your market over, and the purchasers are few and unwilling, then you will be ready. Mark my words, proud one!" and she shuffled away with a malicious laugh.

Angela looked after her and contracted her brows angrily; then, bending over her basket, she busied herself in sorting out the withered flowers, and tying the others afresh.

The intense heat of the day had passed, the sun was sinking, and a cooler air was blowing off the sea. Angela was tired and cramped with standing so long in one position, but she still lingered under the gateway in the hope of selling the flowers which still remained in her basket to some chance customer—some English or American tourist—who might pass, returning from the day's excursion, to his hotel. But, though she waited patiently, no one came, and she was just about to take up her basket and return home, when a man's figure passed the gateway. He glanced carelessly at the flowers, paused suddenly, looked again, more eagerly this time, and then came forward and bowed to the shrinking girl with an insolent smile on his bold face.

"So, my pretty one, I have found you at last," he said.

The girl did not answer; but her eyes dilated, and she looked eagerly round as if seeking a way of escape. But there was no outlet to the little court, and the man's tall figure blocked up the gateway. He laughed as he saw her disappointed glance.

"You cannot escape me so easily this time! Why are you so cruel, mademoiselle! What, not one word—one smile for your devoted, adoring slave! Day after day I have watched for you, and now that a fortunate chance has thrown me across your path, you treat me with this chilling disdain—this cruel silence! What, still not a word! Permit me, then, to buy some of these flowers. They are faded, it is true; but a smile from you, mademoiselle, will revive them."

He bent forward as he spoke, and attempted to take a small cluster of rose-buds from the basket. The girl snatched it away, and her eyes gleamed angrily.

"Monsieur, they are not for sale," she said coldly.

"What! You will not even sell me your flowers?" and the man's face darkened, he bit his moustache savagely, and there came a fierce light into his eyes which frightened the girl.

She glanced nervously up the street. Except for one or two children it was almost empty now, and the shadows were gathering darkly. She drew up her head, and made a movement as if to pass her persecutor.

"Permit me to pass, monsieur. It grows late," she said.

"Not till I have a flower! What!" as the girl hesitated, and a look of repugnance and loathing crossed her face, "you will not! Truly, a kiss will be more acceptable," he added with an insolent laugh, and he came nearer and put his hand on her shoulder, and approached his face to hers. As his hot breath crossed her cheek she gave a little shriek of terror, dropped her basket on the ground, and struggled with all her puny strength to push him away while she looked wildly up the street for help.

It was nearer than she had hoped, for as her scream rang out again, a tall figure rushed swiftly across the street, and placing two powerful hands on her assailant's shoulders, flung him violently aside. With a muttered curse the man drew his stiletto and faced the unexpected enemy, who was tall, powerful-looking man, with a stern handsome face, and brilliant, dark eyes. Then his face changed, and the hand which held the stiletto dropped to his side.

"Count Paolo! Is it you again?" he stammered.

"Again—spy! the other answered, in a tone of mingled contempt and anger. He turned away with a little gesture of scorn, and looked at the girl, who had sprung to his side, and was clinging with both hands to his arm. "Courage, my child; you are safe with me," he said, and his voice softened as he spoke, and gently loosened the clinging hands from his arm.

Her persecutor sneered.

"Truly, the protection of the Count Paolo is invaluable," he said with an insulting smile. "Take care, monsieur! You have escaped the fate of your friends so far—you may not always be so fortunate."

Count Paolo did not answer, except by a slight contemptuous gesture of his hand; and the other man, with a low, ironical bow to the frightened girl, passed out of the archway, and proceeded up the street.

Angela drew a deep breath of relief. She looked up at the Count with her beautiful eyes full of an intense gratitude.

"Monsieur, how can I thank you enough?" she faltered.

The Count bowed gravely.

"I am repaid already, my child. Tell me, how came you to know that man?"

"I have only seen him three times; but he frightens me. Two days ago he followed me along the street, and spoke to me," Angela faltered. "I would not answer, and I sought shelter in a church—for I was afraid he would follow me home—and so escaped him. Then to-day he found me. I had no time to fly." She took up her basket from the ground, and looked anxiously up and down the street. "I may go now, I think? A thousand thanks, monsieur!" she added. And she bowed with a quiet courtesy which somewhat astonished Count Paolo.

He looked at her attentively.

"You are English, I think?" he said abruptly.

The girl smiled.

"Partly; my father is English, but my mother was an Italian; and I was born in England. Father is an artist," she added; and there was a note of pride in her voice which rather amused the Count.

Perhaps the girl, who was very quick-sighted, saw the gleam of amusement in his face, for she drew up her head proudly, and her eyes flashed.

"Yes, he is an artist, and a very talented artist," she said defiantly; "but, alas! he is ill. He has been very ill for some

months, and unable to work. That is the reason"—and she coloured again, and glanced down at her flowers—"why monsieur finds me thus."

The Count looked at her with a new compassion in his bright eyes.

"That is sad indeed," he said.

He spoke now in English, slowly and quietly, but perfectly correctly and with ease, and the girl's eyes brightened at the sound of her native tongue.

"To be ill in a foreign country, and among strangers! Have you any friends here, mademoiselle?"

"None; we are quite alone. Oh, monsieur, if you would——"

She clasped her hands, and looked at him with lovely, beseeching eyes.

It would have needed a colder, less impressionable heart than Paolo possessed to resist their appeal, and he smiled, and looked at her encouragingly.

"If I would—what, my child?" he said gently.

"If you would see him. He knows no one here, and it is so dull for him shut up all day alone in his room, without a creature to speak to him." The girl faltered, and her eyes filled with tears. "It would be such a treat to him to see anyone who can speak English. I am but a dull companion, and I am obliged to be out all day."

"Certainly I will come," and Paolo smiled pleasantly. "He is an artist, you say; perhaps by chance he may have some pictures for sale. Is it so?" as the sudden light of hope which flashed across the beautiful face answered this question. "Well, let us go, my child; unless, indeed, you would choose that I should call another time," he added.

"Oh no—now, please," the girl cried, and she moved hastily out of the archway into the street.

The Count followed, walking by her side down the narrow street and across a more open space, until they entered a more frequented thoroughfare. Here, once or twice, Paolo met some acquaintance, who gave him a bow and an amused glance at his companion, and once some ladies driving past in a grand carriage leant forward and looked at him curiously, and waved their hands in greeting. But Paolo was profoundly indifferent to the amused, curious glances. He walked by the side of his companion, talking to her pleasantly meanwhile, until they had left the more public thoroughfare and entered a long, evil-smelling street, which was narrow



enough to have enabled the tenants of the houses to shake hands, if it so pleased them, with their opposite neighbours out of the higher windows. The girl paused before one of these houses, hesitated, and looked scrutinisingly at her companion.

"Monsieur, my father knows nothing of this;" and she touched her basket of flowers significantly. "He believes that I teach English to the children of our doctor. You will keep my secret?"

"Certainly, my child."

There was an increased pity in the dark eyes which rested on the girl's fair, flushed face. She was so young and pretty; so unfitted to fight alone the battle of life, to walk safely among the snares and pitfalls which would certainly beset the path of one so beautiful and apparently so lonely! Paolo, who knew the world, felt his heart beat with chivalrous pity as he followed the slight figure up the broken staircase, higher and higher, till it paused before a closed door. She stood with her fingers on the handle, and looked back at him with an anxious, pathetic smile. There was a window on the opposite wall which faced the west, and a ray of golden light shot through the misty gloom of the staircase, and fell on her beautiful face and touched her soft curls with brighter gold. She put her finger warningly on her lips.

"Remember—not a word," she said hurriedly.

"I will remember, but first"—and Count Paolo put his hand lightly on her arm—"will you not tell me your name?"

"Certainly; it is Monteith—Angela Monteith," she answered, and then turned the handle and led him into the room.

Paolo looked round curiously. It was a large, bare room, almost devoid of furniture; a few studio properties, such as models, and casts, and bits of drapery, were scattered here and there; a lay figure, covered with a sheet, stood in one corner; an easel, on which was placed a gigantic canvas, occupied the centre of the room. In the window was a small stand full of bright flowers, and in one corner, stretched on a low pallet, Paolo saw the wasted figure of a tall man with a long, golden beard and an eager, haggard face.

He raised himself as the door opened, and looked eagerly and a little suspiciously at the unexpected visitor.

"Who is this, Angela?" he said, speaking in English and in a quick, irritable voice. "How often have I told you that I will not have any strangers—"

He paused as Count Paolo went forward and bowed courteously.

"Pardon this intrusion; though no artist myself I live much among artists, and I have heard of monsieur's genius," he said in his suave, high-bred voice, "and I asked permission of mademoiselle," he bowed to the young girl, who was standing just within the door, nervously twisting the ribbons of her hat, "to visit your studio."

"My studio!"

Mr. Monteith gave a short laugh, and cast a disparaging look round the room.

"Such as it is, you are welcome here, monsieur."

He paused and looked enquiringly at his visitor, who bowed gravely.

"Paolo Ostrolenka, at your service, monsieur."

"Paolo—not the Count Paolo Ostrolenka?" and Mr. Monteith raised himself and looked up eagerly.

"The same, monsieur."

"Indeed! Ah, I do feel honoured by your visit, Count; I only regret that I am unable to give you the welcome I could wish to give."

"It is already given." Again the Count bowed and smiled. "I fear the light has faded too much to allow me to see your pictures this evening, monsieur."

"I am afraid so—stay! Angela, child, draw the easel nearer to the window; turn it more to the light—yes, so. Perhaps Count Paolo may be able to form some opinion of its poor merits," he went on in a tone of proud humility which ill disguised the vanity beneath. He raised himself higher on his pillows, and looked eagerly at the Count as he advanced and took up his position before the easel. "You recognise the subject? Hypatia and her pupil."

The Count bowed gravely. He stood and looked at the picture with thoughtful, critical eyes, which fully recognised its merits and were also fully awake to its faults. The two figures—the noble Greek maiden and her pupil, the boy monk—were correctly drawn, and the faces of both were exquisitely finished, but the picture as a whole was tame and spiritless, and conveyed an impression to the spectator of being—as, indeed, it was—the work of a man worsted in the battle of life, who had given up the struggle after fame as hopeless. Some such thought passed through the Count's mind as he stood before the picture. Angela came to his side and touched his arm softly.

"It is beautiful, is it not, monsieur?"

Oh, far more beautiful than many of the pictures in the galleries which the tourists rush to see!" she said eagerly.

The Count smiled indulgently at the girl. She, at least, had perfect faith in the artist's genius—unlimited admiration and reverence for its results. Her face was all aglow with pleasure as she gazed from the picture to the Count's face, and sought with eager eyes to read there his opinion as to the merits of the picture. But Paolo's face, which could be eloquent enough at times, could also assume a perfectly impassive, inscrutable expression at will, and Angela quite failed to understand it now.

"A beautiful picture, truly," he said politely; "and the price, monsieur?"

The artist hesitated an instant, and his sunken eyes gleamed. He raised himself on his pillows, and looked eagerly at the Count.

"Three hundred guineas," he answered slowly; "that is my price."

"Three hundred guineas!"

Paolo hesitated. It was a large sum; larger than he had expected, certainly larger than he considered the picture to be worth, and also larger than he could at that time afford to give. But he could not say so with the two pair of anxious eyes fixed on his face, with the two anxious faces watching him so intently.

"Three hundred! It is a somewhat higher price than I can afford to give just at present," he began; "but," for the sudden change from hopeful expectation to despair which swept over the girl's fair face touched his kind heart, "if monsieur will trust the picture to me for a few days, I have many rich friends, and I dare say I can find a purchaser. And now," and he glanced round the bare room and the canvases which stood with their faces turned to the wall on one side, "is there not some smaller picture—something less pretentious, which monsieur will allow me to purchase to adorn my own walls?"

"Angela, child, wake up. Show the Count my Esther, my Andromeda," the artist cried. "Make haste, the daylight is almost gone."

"Permit me."

Paolo crossed the room, and assisted Angela to move the canvases. But neither of the paintings which Mr. Monteith had named pleased the Count's critical eyes. He caught a glimpse, however, in a corner, of a small study of a girl's head. He took it up and looked at it admiringly.

"Your portrait, mademoiselle," he said, and looked at Angela.

She smiled and blushed, and her father answered for her.

"Yes; a study—merely a study," he said disparagingly.

"A very charming study. Will monsieur allow me to purchase this, and name the price," the Count said, and his brilliant eyes looked from the picture to the fair original's face with such undisguised admiration, that Angela's blushes grew more vivid, and her heart throbbed with delight.

"Certainly, Count. The price is forty pounds, a mere bagatelle," Monteith answered with a careless assumed contempt in his voice, which was sadly contradicted by his eager eyes, by the bare room, and the signs of poverty which met the eye on every side.

Count Paolo smiled.

"Truly a mere bagatelle," he answered politely, as he took out a blank cheque from his pocket-book, and looked round for pen and ink:

Angela brought them from a table at the farther end of the room. Her eyes were smiling, her whole face seemed transformed, and the hand which took the cheque from the Count trembled with delight and eagerness.

He looked at her and smiled sympathetically.

"Perhaps a cheque will be inconvenient. Would monsieur prefer notes or gold?" he enquired.

"Oh no—no!" and Monteith's trembling fingers closed tightly over the flimsy bit of paper. "Our friend, Dr. Antonelli, will cash it for me. My daughter will take it when she goes, as usual, to-morrow, to teach the little ones."

"Then I will say good-evening."

Count Paolo held out his hand to the artist. Angela had lighted a lamp; for the daylight was fading fast, and it was almost dark in the room; and placed it on a small table near the bed. The light fell full on the artist's face, and Paolo saw more distinctly than before how worn and haggard it looked, and how grey it was with the first touch of Death's fingers. Angela, watching him intently, saw the look of compassion and surprise which passed over his face, and her own grew paler. The haunting dread against which she had closed her heart so resolutely during the last few weeks all at once assumed gigantic proportions, and refused to be banished any longer. She gave a short, stifled sob, and her hands clasped and unclasped nervously; but her emotion passed unnoticed by the two men,

who were exchanging a few words of farewell.

"I will send for the picture to-morrow, monsieur," the Count said in his deliberate, musical voice, "and you will permit me to call sometimes to enquire after your health! You must feel this solitude"—and he glanced round the room compassionately—"very irksome sometimes."

"I shall be delighted to see you, Angela, show the Count downstairs. Take care how you tread, monsieur; the stairs are old, and full of snares and pitfalls."

"I need not trouble mademoiselle," protested the Count; but Angela had already taken the lamp from the table and moved towards the door. She placed the lamp on a little bracket at the head of the staircase, and waited silently until the door had closed behind the Count, then, with a swift, impulsive movement, she sprang forward, and put her hand on his arm.

"Monsieur, you are so kind—oh, so kind! You will tell me—you do not think that he looks very ill?" she cried anxiously, and she fixed her beautiful, imploring eyes on his face.

The Count forced a smile.

"Not so ill but that with careful nursing, and nourishing food and wine, he may soon be better, I trust, my child," he answered. "You have a doctor?"

"Yes; Dr. Antonelli. He is very kind, and he says what you say—nourishing food, wine—that is all the cry! And for a month," and the beautiful proud face quivered, "all we had, every halfpenny, I earned by selling flowers! See my day's wages!" and she threw out her hand with a little tragic gesture, and showed the Count a few small coins. "How could I get nourishing food—wine with these? Now," and her face changed, and brightened, and grew so exquisitely lovely, that Count Paolo, who was an ardent lover of beauty in any form, gazed at her with delighted eyes, "thanks to you, I can get all he wants. Oh, surely," and she caught his hand and kissed it impulsively, "the Holy Mother herself sent you to me!"

The Count gave a little cynical smile. He did not believe in the efficacy of any prayers, whether to the Holy Mother or any other divinity, for he was unfortunately devoid of any religious belief whatever. All creeds and faiths, whether Catholic or Protestant, Buddhist or

Mohammedan, were alike to him; but not for worlds would he have cast a doubt on the child's innocent faith. So he smiled kindly on the sweet enthusiast and answered:

"Doubtless it was so, my child. Promise me one thing—that you will never sell flowers in the street again. You are much too young, and"—he hesitated a moment—"beautiful to be exposed to such insults as that miscreant offered you to-day. I know him well; he will not be satisfied with one repulse, he will seek you out again, and perhaps find you when"—and he gave her a gracious smile—"I am not near to protect you. So promise me you will not run the risk again."

"Monsieur, there is no need. The money which you gave me for the picture—ah, how proud I feel to know that you thought the portrait of my poor face worth purchasing"—and she smiled at him with beautiful, eloquent eyes—"will last a long time. Before it is spent my father will be able to work again, or, perhaps, you may have found a purchaser for the picture."

"Let us hope so; and now farewell, my child."

Paolo held out his hand with a kind smile. Angela took it in both her own, and with an impulsive gesture bent her head and kissed it.

"I cannot reward you, monsieur, but the blessed saints surely will," she said in a wistful voice.

Paolo smiled gravely.

"Nay, I have an angel's thanks already. That should surely be enough," he said. Then he drew his hand gently away, and, with a smile and courteous bow, descended the rickety staircase and passed into the quiet street.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal  
CONDUCTED BY  
**CHARLES DICKENS**

No. 874. NEW SERIES. SATURDAY, AUGUST 29, 1885. PRICE TWOPENCE.

## A STERN CHASE.

A STORY IN THREE PARTS.  
BY MRS. CASHEL-HOEY.

"A stern chase is a long chase."

### THE FIRST PART.

#### CHAPTER I. DR. ROSSLYN'S HOUSEHOLD.

HISTORICALLY regarded, Harley Street is interesting; its actual aspect is, however, that of highly respectable dullness. Twenty years ago, when the external ornamentation of town houses was a novel art, and still regarded with a shy suspiciousness, which has happily yielded to emulative zeal and a liberal display of flower-boxes, Harley Street was even duller than it is now. More respectable, more professional, it could not be. A complete example of the representative features of Harley Street was to be found, early in the sixties, in the desirable residence of Dr. Rosslyn, a physician in extensive practice among the class of people of whom the doctor himself was wont to speak with accurately meted respect as "persons of importance." This was a happy phrase, not so much out of date as "persons of quality," and less of a concession to modern inelegance of speech than "swells." It was, however, more polite than accurate; for a large proportion of Dr. Rosslyn's clients were of no importance whatever, except in their own minds' eye, being merely, as Mr. Toots felicitously expresses it, "regularly rich." Regular riches, if they sometimes make to themselves wings, and fly away from their owners, are, however, apt to supply feathers for numerous nests among at least two of the learned professions. Dr. Rosslyn had gathered in the shape of golden guineas so many substantial substitutes for the rosebuds which are the poet's type of evanescence—while his patients' time was still a-flying—that he

was in harmony with his surroundings when he settled in the solid, spacious, responsible house in Harley Street, where, early in the sixties, he might have been found, sharing its dullness with his step-daughter, Lillias Merivale.

Dr. Rosslyn had the appearance of a prosperous gentleman, and the professional manner of a period which was not yet accustomed to the unconventional and the original in persons charged with anything so serious as the care of the precious health of good society. The dullness and ugliness of his house—they lent him a solid merit in the opinion of many—were not of his devising; he had found the house dull and ugly, and so he would leave it to his successor. That it was but a dreary abode for a boy and a girl—especially for the girl—had never occurred to Dr. Rosslyn, who, although he was not one of those who "hang up their good humour and good manners with their hats in the hall," was one of the most self-centred of men. His was a nature that neither attracted nor gave out sympathy, and those things that did not touch him did not exist for him.

The house and the man counted for a good deal in the sum of influences which had formed the character of Dr. Rosslyn's step-daughter, Lillias Merivale; the former tending to produce subdued spirits and a whitey-brown order of taste; the latter to foster self-reliance, the valuable habit of thinking before speaking, and the equally valuable, but always painfully acquired, power of suppressing evidence of any feeling that would fail to be understood.

At the window of the large and gloomy dining-room of Dr. Rosslyn's house stood Lillias Merivale, one morning in early spring, when the east wind was out in Harley Street and everywhere else, and the atmosphere was agreeably flavoured

with gritty dust and straws from the neighbouring mews. She was peering over a chocolate-coloured wire-blind in a substantial mahogany frame, which obscured the lower panes of the window, and went as ill as possible with the harsh and staring green of the heavy curtains. She was watching the letter-carrier, who was distributing the morning mail in Harley Street, and her countenance bore witness to a more than common anxiety as to what might be that useful functionary's special mission to herself. Her expression was at all times serious for a girl of eighteen; but its thoughtfulness was very sweet, and lent to her face a beauty which in mere feature it did not possess. Lilius Merivale was fair; her eyes were dark brown, with a somewhat uncertain glance, as though they were weak or the vision defective; her abundant hair, worn in large plaits arranged like a coronet over the forehead and in a coil at the back of the head, was of the richest chestnut-brown. The sudden irradiation of her rare smile would change the thoughtful face, which hasty observers thought cold, into a lovely vision of brightness, and when to that lustrous smile was added the music of a heartfelt, joyous, silvery laugh, the transformation was complete. As she stood at the window, on the watch for the postman, her smooth forehead was knitted into a look of care, and her cheeks were pale.

The letter-carrier crossed the street, the rat-tat sounded, the morning's budget tumbled into the capacious letter-box, and Lilius darted to the hall-door. In a moment she held in her hand the object of her watch, a foreign letter; the next she ran upstairs, and turning into the gloomy little sitting-room at the back of the big and ugly drawing-room, her own especial domain, she opened the envelope with an odd mixture of eagerness and reluctance. But she cast a preliminary glance at the prim and solid timepiece on the mantel-shelf, ticking away the moments which divided her from the inexorably punctual breakfast-hour.

The letter was a long one; closely written on a large sheet of thin, blue-lined letter-paper. In a man's handwriting, too; evidently a love-letter. How, if it were otherwise, should it bring that deep colour to the cheek of Lilius Merivale, cause her to pass her disengaged hand across and across her forehead, and make her draw a long breath like a wearied swimmer when she came to the end of it?

Slow and deliberate steps crossed the stone hall below; steps lighter but equally deliberate passed the door of the little sitting-room. Lilius knew what those sounds meant; the solemn butler was about to announce to the household and the neighbours, by a performance upon a thunderous gong, that Dr. Rosslyn's breakfast was served, and Mrs. Norton had gone down, and was waiting for her in the dining-room. She recovered herself with a successful effort which bespoke practice, and descended the stairs with her usual composure. But she repeated in her thoughts many times before she met the unsuspecting looks turned upon her by her step-father and Mrs. Norton: "I cannot tell him. It is impossible."

Dr. Rosslyn was a good-looking man a little over sixty, admirably well preserved, plainly not a physician who ignored his own advice and avoided his own prescriptions, slightly bald, silver-haired, and of an agreeable though not an unreservedly benignant countenance. A smooth, taciturn, obstinate person, who was punctually obeyed by his household, rather from fear than from affection, with one exception, presently to be disclosed. He was already seated in a ponderous chair with a slippery red leather cushion at the far end of a very long and wide table, which displayed the materials of a substantial breakfast, when Lilius entered the room. He lowered his "Times," and held his gold-rimmed eye-glasses at the length of the watered ribbon by which they hung, as his step-daughter bade him good-morning, and took her place.

"Good-morning, Lilius. You are late."

"I am a little, papa."

"Are you not well?"

"I am quite well, thank you."

The glasses were readjusted, the newspaper was propped against a handy toastrack; the master of the house made an excellent breakfast, drank his tea, and informed himself in current history, in unbroken silence—an order of things evidently familiar to Lilius and the third person present. It was not enjoined upon the doctor's womankind that they were not to speak at breakfast, but they rarely did speak, and they never talked. A few disjointed questions and answers they permitted themselves, in subdued tones, and they were invariably glad when breakfast was over, and Dr. Rosslyn retired to his consulting-room. Then would Mrs. Norton seek the vast and glo-

underground region, where she was recognised as "somebody," and give her orders for the day with much pomposity and a great deal of superfluous detail; while Lillias would resort to the companionship of the pianoforte in the big and ugly drawing-room, for the daily practice which was her chief recreation.

When the head of a household causes a sensible relief, if not a positive thrill of pleasure, by informing his womankind either that he does not intend to dine at home, or that he wants to have some men to dine with him, and, therefore, shall not require the presence of the ladies, it may be presumed that their mutual relations are not of the freest, easiest, and most frankly affectionate kind. Lillias Merivale and Mrs. Norton would not on any account have compared notes on the subject, but, if they had so far departed from propriety as to do this, they must have agreed that the "off" days were pleasant and welcome. It was with a positively guilty sense of satisfaction that Lillias heard the doctor make the usual curt communication to Mrs. Norton, before he withdrew to his consulting-room:

"I do not dine at home to-day. Have you anything to say to me?"

Mrs. Norton had not anything to say, and the ordinary routine of the day was observed. But Lillias Merivale's practice was a make-believe. She sat before the pianoforte absorbed in thoughts of too distracting a nature, judging from her looks, to be fitting for her age, and the quiet security of her position in life. Once during the time preserved to her by prescriptive custom free from the incursions of Mrs. Norton, Lillias rose, trembling, and with the flush of a desperate resolution on her cheeks, and flitting noiselessly down the stairs, approached her step-father's consulting-room, which was shut off from the hall by double doors of red baize. She listened, with a beating heart, for the sound of voices within, but no sound reached her ear; in a moment more she would have found herself in Dr. Rosslyn's presence, and irrevocably committed to a certain line of action, had not the outer doors swung open, and given admittance to a patient who was evidently one of the doctor's "persons of importance." The unspeakably correct man-servant who ushered in the lady looked disconcerted at the irregularity of Miss Merivale's being visible in that part of the house during consultation hours, and Lillias retreated, all her courage routed, and guiltily conscious that she was infinitely relieved by her defeat.

Having regained the drawing-room and the piano-stool, she again drew out the letter which had come like a bombshell into her quiet life, scattering all things in fragments around it, and this time she found a brief postscript, which she had previously overlooked. It was written across one of the pages, and contained only these words:

"On second thoughts I would rather that you said nothing. Let it come from myself. I am ready to take all the risks—'equal to either fortune,' as Eugene Aram said. Keep everything that I have told you to yourself. I shall be with you before long."

"And I had so nearly overlooked this!" thought Lillias. "How thankful I am that I was too much afraid to speak this morning! But does it show true knowledge of papa? Has he forgotten the difficulty with which a far smaller victory over that fixed will was won?"

In similar questionings was the mind of Lillias Merivale exercised all through the uneventful day, and when it wore on towards evening, with the relief that frequently ensued upon Dr. Rosslyn's giving his womankind a holiday, namely, Mrs. Norton's going out to tea, while Lillias was left to welcome solitude—she was no nearer to a peaceful solution of them. She resolved to seek the relief of writing; of pouring out all of her thoughts to her correspondent; although she was doubtful whether her reply could reach him at the place from which he had written. She put on paper as many of the feelings, misgivings, and apprehensions with which she was assailed as her skill in expressing herself, which was above the common, permitted. In after days Lillias had good reason to recall the employment of that evening, the care that she bestowed upon her letter, the accuracy with which she dated and addressed it. The writing of it did not, however, bring to her mind the longed-for relief. She was still profoundly disturbed, and foreboding of ill was busy with her.

Dr. Rosslyn returned home late that night, and Lillias was still awake when he passed the door of her room in going to his own. As she listened to his footsteps, her hand stole up and touched the folded paper under her pillow, and once more she sighed deeply.

While Lillias falls at last into the deep slumber of which she is too young to be altogether deprived by trouble of the mind, let us turn a backward glance upon the history of Dr. Rosslyn's household.

Dr. Rosslyn was a widower for the second time. His first wife, who had shared the early days of struggle and anxiety which are the common lot of young professional men, had died as those days were drawing to a close. The prospect of a secure position and a good income was just opening upon the still young doctor, who had made several good hits, and was also beginning to reap the reward of steady application and good character. She left him an only child, now a grown man, twenty-three years old. Three years after his wife's death, Dr. Rosslyn married again. His second choice was a young widow, and Lillias Merivale was her only child.

His second marriage was the halcyon period of Dr. Rosslyn's life, and in the sunshine of its happiness his nature seemed to change, and the reserve and self-concentration of his character to give way. His wife proved a true mother to his little son, and the children regarded each other as brother and sister. Upon this happy home there fell a thunderbolt, when it was of but five years' duration. Mrs. Rosslyn died, after an illness so brief that her husband had not time to school himself to the prospect of separation, and, with her, all that had sweetened and brightened his life departed also. He was not a man to find a resource in the children who remained; his professional work afforded him the only solace of which he was susceptible. How much he suffered was known to himself solely; his former habit of reserve was resumed; from thenceforth it was only in his professional capacity that Dr. Rosslyn was attractive in manner.

Shortly after her mother's death the little Lillias, whose step-father was her sole guardian, became an heiress on a modest scale, in consequence of a series of deaths in her late father's family. Dr. Rosslyn fulfilled his duties conscientiously, managing his ward's property admirably, giving her a good education under the superintendence of a resident governess, and providing in every way but one for her comfort and welfare. And even the exception was less real than it appeared. The child of his dead wife was dearer to the cold, worldly-minded, and yet world-despising man—not a rare combination, paradoxical though it seem to be—than she or others could have supposed, and of more account in his life. He did not know that her decorous existence in the gloomy Harley Street house was tiresome and unin-

teresting; he was not capable of looking at it with her eyes, and Lillias never complained that it was so. When the time came at which she was emancipated from schoolroom hours and the routine of lessons, she entertained no such visions as those which now fill the brain of middle-class young ladies on "coming out." She did not expect a whirl of gaiety, or a chorus of admiration. She was glad, because Mrs. Norton had taught her all that it was in her to teach, and her new-born freedom would enable her to study unchecked by routine. She, however, did cherish one hope connected with the event. It was that she might now see more of her step-father, and be permitted to be a companion to him. She was as free from personal vanity as any young girl can be without being also stupid and apathetic, and of the conventional meaning of "coming out" she had formed no idea. The only indication which her step-father had given of his considering her position radically changed, was his consulting her, greatly to her astonishment, as to whether Mrs. Norton should or should not be retained as chaperon after her services as governess had ceased to be required.

The doctor was not ill-pleased by the unhesitating decision of Lillias that her old friend was to be asked to remain with her. Here, at least, was no heartless love of change and novelty. The girl possessed some of the steadfast constancy, which had been a beautiful element in the character of her mother. The matter was soon settled, and, when this had been done, and the allowance made to Lillias out of her carefully-managed property had been doubled, Dr. Rosslyn took little further notice of the fact that her schoolroom days were over.

Even in those days she had come to know what trouble meant, and it was in this wise.

The one person in the world whom Lillias Merivale loved with all the warmth of a nature which had unawakened treasures of feeling in it, was he whom she called her "brother." The attachment between the boy and the little girl who came to share his nursery and playroom, brought by that lovely lady whom he could still remember well, although she was but a dim vision to her own child, had grown with their growth, and had probably gained by the loss they had jointly sustained the death of Dr. Rosslyn's second wife.

The dull house in Harley Street was

turned into the brightest of abodes for Lillas when Hugh Rosslyn came home for the holidays, and the presence of his "sister" atoned for much which the boy disliked and resented in his home. Hugh was a high-spirited, sensitive fellow, and had never got on very well with his father, whose misfortune it was, in common with a great many men whose coldness is chiefly the result of unconquerable shyness, to convey the notion of indifference where the feeling does not exist.

"Ah yes, Lily, it's all very fine; papa is very fond of you, but he doesn't care what becomes of me." Hugh would say this, in almost the same form of words, over and over again, when Lillas was a tall, lanky, remarkably good child, whom the doctor never saw out of a clean frock or off her best behaviour, and Hugh was a big, handsome, troublesome schoolboy, not to be ignored, and hard to be governed, except by a method which his father did not know how to take.

As time went on the impression on Hugh's mind deepened, and so did the conviction of Lillas that he was wrong; but she could not explain or justify that conviction, and the differences of character and temperament, which divided the father and son, manifested themselves more and more plainly.

Most men who have had their own way to make in life, and have made it—for whom no steps have been cut in the steep slope of the mountain of difficulty, or convenient handrail provided—find it hard to realise the temperament to which security and ease do not present themselves as un-mixed and satisfying good. That there should be persons so perverse as to decline to take the good things provided for them by others who have had to earn them hardly, is alike inexplicable and offensive to them—a frowardness to be regarded with scorn and rebuked with anger. Dr. Rosslyn was prepared to make things very comfortable for his only son; but he wanted to do this according to his own ideas, and when he found that those of Hugh were not at all in accordance with them, he was keenly disappointed. In a word, the young man developed artistic tastes with which his father had no sympathy, and declined the decorous University and professional career which was proposed to him.

It is difficult for persons who have no artistic tastes or perceptions to take artists seriously. The passing of life in the repre-

sentation of things beautiful or non-beautiful, in various kinds of material, has a preposterous effect upon their minds, and even when they give in to a conventional admiration of the work of the artist, they cherish contempt not always concealed for his aims and his notions.

Dr. Rosslyn was one of those persons, and it was peculiarly annoying to him that his son should "take to an idle, vagabond life." Such was his invariable definition of the pursuit of art as a profession. There was a sharp contest of will between the two; and, although the young man carried his point in the end, he gained his victory at the cost of a further straining of relations which had never been so frank and cordial as they ought to have been, and also at that of great pain to Lillas.

Hugh Rosslyn took to painting, studied in foreign studios, and made such progress in his art that, if it had not been a forbidden subject, Dr. Rosslyn might have got over his prejudices by the natural aid of paternal pride. He combined a taste for travel with the love of painting. At the time when we pass the doors of the house in Harley Street he had been absent from England for several months.

The house was doubly dull to Lillas Merivale when the slow procession of the days could not bring Hugh either to join the trio at dinner, or take her out of afternoons to see pictures, or to walk in the Park, and contemplate the noble spectacle presented by society in the Ride and the Row. Lillas had little opportunity of seeing the world any nearer than this; a few dull dinners of the scrupulously-paid-debt order, and a few evening parties, where she did not shine, formed the whole of her experience of the "giddy maze."

She was, however, happy if only Hugh were content; for she belonged to that order of women who estimate their own claims to consideration at a humble rate, and live in and for their affections. Lillas Merivale's affection had but a narrow sphere. The "brother," whom she loved with all her heart; the step-father, for whom she entertained a timid and grateful affection; and Mrs. Norton, an excellent person, but hardly more interesting than the pug in whom her soul was centred, formed all the population of Lillas's actual world. She had many dream-friends, however, and an imagination sufficiently active to turn the dull house in Harley Street into a palace of the fancy, and to people it with the heroes



and heroines of poetry, history, and romance. She read all these with almost passionate enjoyment.

Lilias might fairly pride herself on being to a certain extent in the confidence of her step-father. She knew what his feelings about Hugh were, and that he hoped the influence of foreign travel, and the "rubbing shoulders with men who took life seriously," as he put it, would divert his son from the frivolities of art, and turn him into a man of the world. She knew that although he rarely mentioned Hugh, and never asked her questions respecting his letters to her, believing, or affecting to believe, that they were "full of nothing but trumpery about pictures and statues," he had certain notions and hopes connected with Hugh's return, and her own truer instinct and readier sympathy made her feel sure that his notions would prove illusory, and his hopes be frustrated. She knew, from what Hugh had said to her when he was at home, and now wrote to her when he was away, that the artist-life he had chosen was full of increasing fascination for him, and that the knowledge he was gaining of the wide, wide world was but confirming his dislike to that narrow and conventional sphere to which his father hoped he would yet be induced to restrict himself.

There was another point on which Lilias had gained some knowledge of Dr. Rosslyn's mind respecting his son. She knew that he wished him to marry early, and she imagined that there was someone whom her step-father would welcome as Hugh's wife. But, if it were so, Lilias feared that disappointment was in store for Dr. Rosslyn in this respect also. In her capacity of confidant to her brother, she had been put in possession of Hugh's notions of the sort of woman he meant to marry, and she felt perfectly certain that there was not among their limited common acquaintance any girl who resembled in the slightest degree the ideal being whom he portrayed. The daughters of the grave professional gentlemen and merchants in the higher walks of commerce, those of the superior clerks and the well-to-do parsons, were very nice girls, no doubt. Some of them were pretty, and a few were sensible; but where among their number was to be found the being of infinite loveliness, marvellous grace and radiant intelligence, to whom alone, Hugh Rosslyn had informed Lilias, he would devote himself

for life. At the solemn debt-paying dinners to which she was formally admitted when her schoolroom days came to an end, and at the mild middle-class evening-parties, at which Mrs. Norton enjoyed herself much more than Lilias did, the girl would observe the young ladies who had so much to say for themselves, and make up her mind that Hugh's ideal bride must belong to a different sphere—one into which she, Lilias, could never hope to get a peep.

That Hugh would change his mind about many things when he had seen more of the world, she had been assured by Hugh's father. Perhaps one of them would be the impossibility that he could ever love and marry any woman, who fell short of the radiant vision he had sketched for Lilias in their confidential talks. Perhaps he might come back from distant travel prepared to look with less lofty scorn upon the artificiality and the commonplace of those favoured daughters of fashion whom he and Lilias were wont to contemplate in the park and at the theatres, and whom he contemned with all the energy of his preference for untutored graces and beauties unadorned; while Lilias regarded them with frank admiration and wonder. She could only hope that this might be the case, and that Hugh would give in to his father's wishes on the subject, but she did not feel at all sanguine about it.

"Lilias," said Dr. Rosslyn, on the following morning, as he was about to withdraw to his consulting-room, "what is the latest address you have for writing to Hugh?"

A simple enough question, as Lilias is Hugh's chief correspondent; but it embarrasses Lilias strangely, and she turns so red, and answers with so much confusion that she has had no fresh instructions, that Dr. Rosslyn looks sharply at her. He says nothing, however, but merely nods and leaves the room. As he places himself in his capacious chair, and applies himself to the papers on the huge, heavy table before him, he smiles slightly, as he thinks:

"She has realised that they are not brother and sister, I imagine. That is well."

## PRINCESSES IN THE PAST.

### IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

AMONG the marriages of England's daughters, none has proved more momentous in its results than that of Princess Margaret Tudor with James the Fourth of

Scotland. Had there been a charming young French Princess at hand to marry the gay young King, then would the Stuarts have been entirely out of the succession to the English crown, and the union of Scotland and England, if effected at all, would probably have been effected in a violent manner, leaving a legacy of strife and heart-burning to future generations. But apart from the consequences of the match, there are elements of picturesqueness in the progress of the fair Margaret through her father's kingdom to meet her royal bridegroom.

It was in the prime of summer-time that the princely cavalcade set forth from Richmond Palace—the young bride seated upon a white palfrey and surrounded by an amazonian escort—all maids of honour, the fairest and noblest in the realm. Earls, Bishops, Barons, Knights, and Squires rode in her train, with heralds and marshals in advance, and javelin men and bowmen on the flanks. And so the train marched on over the wide green commons, and past the green cornfields, minstrels singing, trumpets and sackbuts playing, the woods resounding as they passed along.

When the procession reached the more northerly counties, the warmth of the popular welcome increased in fervour. The people lined the roads, bringing drink in great vessels, and would take no payment. As the merry procession entered Lincolnshire, the sheriff met the cavalcade, and rode before it right through the county, and so did all the other sheriffs on the way. Sometimes the Princess would lodge for the night at some venerable abbey, the father abbot and the brethren marching out to meet her with much reverence. At other times some old hostelry would afford a resting-place—The Hart, at Newark, and The Crown, at Tuxford, are especially mentioned. For a night the Princess lodged at Scrooby, in the manor-house of the Archbishop of York, where Wolsey afterwards stayed—a house that was destined later still to be one of the nurseries of the great Puritan movement. And with all its state and ceremony there was a pleasant touch of gipsy life about the progress. As the Princess and her train arrived at the outskirts of a town, a halt would be made by the roadside, and Margaret and her maids would array themselves in fresh attire, while the attendants formed a hedge about her.

Thus the Princess came to York, the Scropes and all the great people of

Yorkshire having ridden out to welcome her; and then came the Lord Mayor in his chain and robes, and Earl Percy in velvet and gold, the trumpets echoing from the old walls. And presently the grand minster was filled with a glittering crowd, as the Archbishop celebrated a grand High Mass. Everywhere there was good cheer; and so, feasting as they went, the cavalcade passed over the border at Berwick, into a country that was not quite so free and jolly.

The Scotch, too, thronged to see their new Queen, and brought drink for those who would pay. And, at Dalkeith, the bridegroom himself arrived to greet his bride.

Full royal were his garb and mien,  
His cloak of crimson velvet piled,  
Hemmed with the fur of marten wild;  
His vest of changeful satin sheen.

Chivalrous and courteous as was his bearing, however, the King of Scotland had but little heart for his royal bride. His heart was still sore with the loss of his Margaret Drummond—the one woman who had power to secure his roving fancy.

In the old abbey church of Holyrood the wedding was celebrated by the Archbishops of Glasgow and of York. The bride wore a robe of white and gold damask, bordered with crimson velvet and lined with white sarcenet; a collar of pearls, and rich coif; her hair hanging down to her heels. A fine, wilful, exacting girl was Margaret, with a good deal of the beauty of the House of York, which she inherited through her mother. But her wedded life was unhappy to the last degree. The King gave her plenty of cause for jealousy, and Margaret revenged herself by making him jealous in his turn. Messengers and envoys were continually on the way between Scotland and England, charged on one side with budgets of Margaret's griefs, and on the other with good advice, and sometimes sharp remonstrance for husband or wife, as the case might be. And then came the mournful ending, when there could be no more quarrelling and making up; as Margaret waited and watched from the tower of lonely Linlithgow while her lord was lying dead on Flodden field.

Nor was Margaret any happier in her second marriage. No State observance here, but a hurried—almost secret—ceremony at Kinnoul Church, where, within a year of the King's death, Margaret gave her hand to young Angus Douglas. And so, quarrelling and complaining to the end, Margaret vanishes from the field of vision.

As for the Princess Mary, Margaret's younger sister, there is something almost ludicrous in the story of her nuptials. She fell in love with Charles Brandon, a handsome and not over-sagacious youth, at her brother's Court, but was compelled, much against her will, to marry the elderly King of France, with the promise that if she would marry this time to please the King, her brother, next time she should be allowed to please herself. The amusing part of the story is the hot haste with which she secured the fulfilment of the promise by making Charles Brandon marry her then and there, even at the French Court, almost before the funeral baked-meats of the royal obsequies had grown cold. But it might have been no laughing matter for the happy bridegroom, who might very well have lost his head for his audacity; and, indeed, he owed his pardon to the good offices of Cardinal Wolsey. In the end, the "cloth of gold and cloth of frieze" mingled harmoniously together, and Brandon, as Duke of Suffolk, escaped the perils of his royal brother-in-law's jealousy to the end of the chapter. But the line of Margaret and Charles came to a bad ending in the person of the unhappy Lady Jane Grey.

And now there comes a long period barren of the marriages of Princesses. Mary, of persecuting fame, was married as Queen of England, and Elizabeth, as far as we know, afforded no material for the bridal chronicler. So several generations have passed away, before we are once more spectators at a Court celebration. This time it is a Princess of the house of Stuart, daughter of James the First, and a great-great-granddaughter of the Margaret with whose royal progress we began this paper, who is about to marry the Elector-Palatine.

The wedding had been delayed by the death of Henry, Prince of Wales, and at the ceremony of betrothal, which took place at the banqueting-hall at Whitehall, the Court was in mourning. The Princess was robed all in black velvet, embroidered with silver quatrefoils, a parure of pearls in her hair, and one little white plume. But if all were in the garb of woe, there was little melancholy in their hearts. A black-eyed, plump, and merry damsel was the Princess, with a propensity for laughter on the slightest occasion. The official who read the marriage contract mispronounced his French after the fashion of Stratford-

atte-Bowe, and the Princess began to titter. The Palatine, young and sprightly, caught the infection, and went off in a paroxysm of suppressed laughter, which only made the Princess worse, while presently the whole giddy-pated company followed in their wake, so that Archbishop Abbot was obliged to cut the ceremony short and hurry on to the blessing.

The wedding ceremony which followed was performed on St. Valentine's Day, 1612, in Whitehall Chapel, the King and Queen being now present. The bride, with her flowing black hair, was crowned with diamonds and pearls; her robe was of white samite, embroidered with pearls and gems. Fifteen young ladies, the flower of the nobility, acted as bridesmaids or train-bearers. The Princess was in the highest spirits, and laughed all the time, while her bridesmaids were quizzing—the word had not been invented, but the process was well known—the young men, supporters of the bridegroom, Dutch, French, and English, and picking out valentines among them, and generally misbehaving themselves.

People said that it was unlucky to laugh at a wedding, but it was a happy thing for the Princess that she had a gay, elastic disposition, for surely never before did Princess and titular Queen pass through such a sea of troubles; driven alike from home and kingdom, and often wanting even the bare necessities of life. But out of her troubles came a great destiny for her descendants, as her daughter, Sophia, born at the Hague in the midst of distress and humiliation, eventually brought into the world the babe who, as George the First, was to become King of England.

But before the rising of the star of Brunswick, there are more of the Stuart Princesses to be married, the daughters of Charles the First taking precedence—Mary, who married William of Nassau, and Henrietta, more a French Princess, after all, than an English one, who married Monsieur of Orleans, and was known at the French Court as Mademoiselle. Then there was Mary, the daughter of James the Second, and eventually the Queen of England, who married William of Orange, the son of the other William and the other Mary, a terribly confusing arrangement, which has misled and perplexed many wanderers among the mazes of history. But these weddings, although interesting at the time, and described by many pen-

have left no striking incidents that dwell upon the memory. So we will take up the thread of weddings in the present reigning house, beginning with the Sophia mentioned in the last paragraph.

Here was an insignificant Princess, whose rôle in life seemed to be to make herself useful among her more fortunate relations, and here, too, an equally insignificant Prince, whose father had been a younger brother among nine strapping sons of the reigning Duke of Brunswick Lunenburg, now known as Hanover. It had long been a misfortune in the family of Guelph, to which they belonged, to have so many children, and the little duchy, divided among nine, would hardly make a mouthful for each. So the nine agreed on a self-denying ordinance that only one should marry and perpetuate the line, and that the one should be chosen, not according to primogeniture, but by the fairer plan of drawing lots. Whether they pulled straws, tossed coins, or threw dice, does not appear, but the lot fell on young George, anyhow, and he accepted his fate and married accordingly. It was the fourth son of this George who was the Prince destined for the Lady Sophia. For, by one accident or another, the elder brothers had no male heirs, and Ernest Augustus, who had been intended for one of the fat Prince-Bishoprics that ran in the family, was admonished to marry.

Ernest's choice fell upon Sophia. The pair were married at Heidelberg, and Sophia was given away by her brother, the Elector. The first boy—our George, he may be called—was born at the old ducal palace at Hanover at just about the time that Cousin Charles was sailing across to England to take up his crown in the glorious Restoration.

Sophia had many sons, but only one daughter, and, being a busy, managing woman, she did her best to marry her well. She had her eye even upon the Dauphin of France for her little Sophia Charlotte, but, failing this great match, she had penetration enough to mate her daughter with the rising house of Brandenburg. The electoral Prince of Brandenburg was a widower, small and crooked—the Hohenzollern with his back half broken, as Carlyle describes him—a man filled with grief for the loss of his late wife, whom he had vowed never to replace with a successor. But events were stronger than his vows. The story goes that at the second wedding the Prince wore a ring which his first wife had given him—

a pledge of their eternal compact—with the motto, "A jamaia." As he gave his hand to the bride the ring broke asunder and fell to the ground, and the Prince turned pale. Was it a sign of anger at his faithlessness, or a release from his compact?

But the marriage was happy enough, it seems, and presently, the Elector of Brandenburg having meanwhile blossomed into King of Prussia, he wrote for a wife for his son, and of the same family; the daughter of our George, by poor Sophia of Zell—herself named Sophia Dorothea.

All this made a considerable stir in the little Court of Hanover. The young Prince came to fetch his bride, and the preliminary ceremony of betrothal was performed at Herrenhausen. The day before the bridal the old Electress, Sophia, still full of activity, although now seventy-four years old, brought the bride to Hanover Castle. The iron discipline of the Prussian Court must have been felt from the first, for, at six o'clock next morning, the poor Princess had to rise and receive the Prussian Embassy. At seven, her own family arrived to pay their state visits. Then her procession was formed and proceeded to the great saloon of the castle, where an altar was erected. The court-marshal led the Crown Prince of Prussia to the right side of the altar, and the Princess to the left. After the ceremony, the whole Court marched in procession to the drawing-room, and in the dance that followed, the Princess danced with all the Princes, and the Crown Prince with all the Princesses.

But with all the fuss that was made over the wedding, poor Sophia Dorothea was a miserable wife enough with her drill-sergeant of a husband, her children separated from her, and she living in constant dread of his caprice and tyranny. However, it was some compensation for her to have been the mother of Frederick the Great.

After this the weddings of the Princesses of the house of Hanover become entirely our affairs. Such was the marriage of Anne, the eldest daughter of George the Second, for whom eighty thousand pounds were voted as dowry. Public opinion, indeed, was revolted at the appearance of the bridegroom, deformed and wizened, and termed by his future father-in-law the Baboon. But Anne, imperious and proud—"she would die to-morrow to be Queen to-day"—declared

that she would marry the Prince even if he were a baboon. And so the boarded gallery was made from the drawing-room of St. James's Palace to the Lutheran chapel in the Friary—the gallery that darkened the windows of Marlborough House, so that tough old Sarah wanted to know when neighbour George would take his orange-box away. The Princess Anne's wedding-garments were virgin robes of silver tissue, and a train six yards long, supported by ten daughters of Dukes and Earls dressed in the same rich tissue. At this wedding the old ceremonies were kept up for the last time, the reception in the bridal-chamber, the scramble for the garter, and all the rest.

And then there were the two Princesses who never married, at least who never owned to it, and who grew old together at the Court of St. James. The Princess Amelia was courted by the Duke of Newcastle, who pretended to be in love with her, and by the Duke of Grafton, who, Walpole hints, was the favoured lover; while the Princess Caroline, who always told the truth, had her favourite in Lord Hervey—Pope's Lord Fanny—and at his death retired altogether from the world.

Another sister, Mary, mildest and gentlest of her race, was married in 1740, at St. James's Chapel, to Frederick, Prince of Hesse, who behaved to her, it is said, like a brute, and she sought a refuge for her troubles in the Church of Rome, almost the only one of her race who has deserted the Protestant fold.

Louisa, the fifth daughter of George the Second, was the next to be married—to the Prince Royal of Denmark, who became King soon after, and the Princess, naturally, Queen—the object of her wish ever since she could speak, writes Horace Walpole. Poor Louisa is thought to have had a sad life with her noble Dane, in whose race a touch of barbarism seemed to linger; but she never complained, and died, silent and composed, while undergoing a painful operation.

By this time Prince Fred's daughters were coming on, and Augusta, the eldest, gentle, beautiful, and accomplished, was married to the Prince of Brunswick in the great council-chamber of St. James's Palace. This wedding was remarkable for the costly and beautiful presents made to the bride. King George the Third, her brother, gave a diamond necklace, worth thirty thousand pounds, Queen Charlotte a diamond stomacher of great

value, and the bride's mother, the Princess Augusta, more diamonds. The Princess had many children, and a good time on the whole, till the revolution came, and her husband was killed in Napoleon's wars, and she took refuge in England, where her unhappy daughter was playing her pranks as Princess of Wales. Altogether, a gloomy ending for the poor woman, who found a last and peaceful home in Westminster Abbey, far away from the tombs of her kindred.

Then comes Caroline Matilda, the tall, fair, graceful girl, whose life is described as sorrowful in its dawn, stormy in its meridian, and melancholy in its close. Betrothed against her will, she was married by proxy in 1766 to a later King of Denmark, a jealous little barbarian, who is described by Walpole—"struts in the circle like a cock-sparrow, and does the honours of himself very civilly." The King, whose power of intellect was but small, was almost completely governed by his physician, Struensee, who finally came to be the chief minister of the kingdom. Struensee was in constant intercourse with the Queen, and she may have compared him in his chivalric bearing, his refined manners, his intelligence and scientific acquirements, with her husband, who was wanting in all these. At any rate, her enemies and his were ready to accuse them, and so one morning there was a little revolution in the palace. The Queen-dowager and her son roused the King from his sleep; they had indisputable proofs of the guilt, so they said, of the two conspirators, who were plotting against his life as well as his honour. They had warrants ready prepared, which the King, dazed and frightened, made no difficulty in signing, and before the rest of the Court were awake the Queen and Struensee were under arrest. Struensee was hastily tried and beheaded, and it was even thought that the Queen would share his fate. But the appearance of the British fleet in the Baltic put an end to thoughts of a criminal process. After a little bluster the unhappy Queen was surrendered to the British Admiral, and Sir Robert Keith escorted her to Zehlendorf, where she passed the rest of her life in neglect and obscurity.

While the eldest of Prince Fred's daughters suffered cruelly by the revolution, her niece, Charlotte Augusta, daughter of George the Third, seemed to flourish in its atmosphere. Her husband, the Prince

of Würtemberg, took sides with Napoleon, and was made one of his Kings of the Rhenish Confederation. The King died just after the final crash of Napoleon's empire, when the Queen retired to end her days in Louisburg Castle, and was known as the Good Queen in all the country round.

And now we have only to chronicle the marriage of the Princess Charlotte, the only legitimate child of George the Fourth, whose marriage of affection with Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg terminated so sadly and so soon in her death. Such an outpouring of popular grief and regret has only been since paralleled by one melancholy period of popular mourning. All the nation assumed the garb of mourners, medals were struck—"Britannia mourns her Princess dead"—elegiac poems were written by the score, and a general agitation and dismay pervaded the land.

As for the Princesses of to-day, their marriages are not yet quite matters of history, and some future chronicler must hewy out their measures of weal and woe.

#### WANTED—THE UNWARY.

I AM a person who has a great wish, or, rather, a very pressing need, "to add to my income"—I might as well candidly confess, to come by an income at all. For I belong to the numerous class of well-born and insufficiently-educated young Englishwomen, who are entirely dependent on parents of limited means, and who are kept back by social prejudice on the one hand and incapacity on the other, from earning a living as post-office clerks, governesses, or employées in a house of business. Of course, I do not carry my impecuniosity or my lack of ability written out at full length on my forehead, like the phylactery of a Pharisee; nor do any other young women of my acquaintance. On the contrary, we all take rather a pride in concealing our poverty under dainty costumes, and walking through our difficulties in natty boots and gloves. However, all the daintiness and nattiness—all the bright ribbons and shiny shoes—cannot conceal the fact that a very large proportion of us are mere poverty-stricken creatures, who either can't or won't come down off the pedestal which we fancy we adorn in society, and enter the ranks of the bread-winners with all due humility and candour. I am quite positive that our name must be Legion, and—though no one has told me so

—that numbers of us are trying, under the rose, and with all due regard to keeping up appearances, to do something which may replenish our threadbare purses. If we are not, I would ask the reason of all the advertisements which appear incessantly in the London and local daily and weekly papers, offering "easy and lucrative employment to ladies and gentlemen who wish to add to their incomes privately without hindrance to present employment."

I myself could do many things without hindrance to my present employment, which may be represented by the same sign as my income, and since of late my costumes, my boots, my ribbons, laces, and gloves have left me labouring under a load which only an income can lighten, I have busied myself with answering a few of these enticing-sounding offers to the necessitous, the uninitiated, the unwary.

I think my experience may benefit a few, if I set forth how I fared with three out of the many which I tried, at various times, but always with the same result.

Number one, which sounded most alluring, offered "two pounds and upwards weekly, to be realised easily in town or country by persons of either sex," with the usual proviso about "present employment."

My reply to this brought me a circular informing me that if I would undertake to sell tea on commission for the advertisers, they would supply me with an article for which I was to charge three shillings a pound, and that I should be allowed to pocket one shilling a pound on all that I sold. I was too much struck by the ludicrous side of this proposal to be angry or disappointed, so I put the circular behind the fire with a smile which ended in a sigh.

Number two I chose, because of its apparently humble ingenueness. "Needle-work was offered to persons in town or country by the head of an establishment in the suburbs of London." I have, I must confess, very little love for sitting down to ply my needle, and I have an idea that needlewomen are very often not very fairly treated in the matter of pay. Still, I wrote for particulars, and I received in due course a respectful and considerate-sounding letter, which offered me the employment of beading lace at prices which sounded to my inexperienced ear as if, with a little industry, I might earn a fair quarterly allowance. I was requested to forward one and sixpence for materials for

a trial yard, for doing which I should be paid according to its value. I did as requested, and the materials came to hand without delay. They were a small packet of very common bugles, a strip of black net of the same quality, about three-eighths of a yard of one of Briggs's tissue-paper transferring-patterns, and a minute scrap of work as a sample. Speaking without the least exaggeration, I am sure that for my eighteenpence I did not receive the value of sixpence.

It is my nature to be rather sanguine as to what I can accomplish if I set to work. I made up my mind to do my best with the unpromising materials before me. Gradually I found—as my eyes grew weary, and my fingers and back followed suit—that if, after unflagging application for about eight hours a day, my work gave satisfaction, I might be fortunate enough to realise five or six shillings a week. I also discovered that the beads they had sent me “to complete one yard of work” would do about two-thirds of that length. I tried to match them at one shop after another, but in vain. In my quest I learnt to my disgust that bugle lace “was going quite out of fashion,” and that “it wasn't worth while to keep bugles or bugle lace in stock any longer,” and a dim suspicion crossed me that by the bait of an addition to my income I had been enticed into paying an exorbitant price for some of the worthless superabundant stock of a dishonest tradesman.

Number three ran something in this way: “Wanted, ladies or young men for easy and lucrative employment at home. No canvassing. Apply,” etc. As it was quite plain this could mean neither needle-work nor tea-vending, I did apply, and got, in answer to my application, about a quire of printed matter from a firm which I will call Messrs. Taykin, Kram, and Co., telling me that these disinterested people were ready to employ me, among many, many others, to colour photographs for them according to a patent process of their own—a process for which no previous knowledge of painting was necessary. They would send me a copious supply of materials, with full instructions, for the modest sum of ten shillings; and when I had assured myself—and them, but principally myself—that I was competent, they would provide me with photographs, and pay me one-and-sixpence each for satisfactory specimens. The circulars contained testimonials by the dozen from enthusiastic

and well-paid folk who found this “new and elegant work easy, pleasant, and remunerative.” There were letters acknowledging postal-orders, letters asking for more work, favourable reports of all descriptions, addressed to Messrs. Taykin and Kram from every part of the United Kingdom.

I could hardly spare half-a-sovereign just then, but, after reflecting that painting was the one thing in which I really excelled; that I could not expect profit without outlay; that “nothing venture, nothing win,” that, finally, it was an occupation which would not compromise me even if I worked at it in the drawing-room, I sent my money, and in a day or two received a box from Messrs. T. and K., containing nothing more and nothing less than materials and instructions for crystoleum painting, called by a newly-manufactured name. This time I fairly understood the nature of my bargain. I was aware that these materials were being sold off everywhere at a great reduction. In the packet was a further circular, much more severely worded than those which were sent to beguile the as yet untrapped one by assurances that “anyone not absolutely colour-blind must succeed in this charming work.” This circular, which I was cautioned to read carefully, spoke of failure as possible—even probable. Still, I wouldn't be quite disheartened, for I was resolved to recover at least the amount I had invested. I reasoned thus: “I know I can paint the things creditably. If these people have found a new and saleable name for an old unsaleable article, that is a matter between themselves and the purchasers of their rechristened crystoleum.”

After carefully practising for some days, I at last turned out two pictures which my own (perhaps partial) judgment, and the more critical eyes of my friends, pronounced faultless. These I sent off, packed according to instructions, to Messrs. Taykin and Kram. In something longer than return of post came back an envelope from the firm, containing a printed form rejecting my work because it was “smeary and streaky” (these words were inserted in writing), recommending me to send them a postal-order to the amount of four shillings and sixpence for further supply of glasses and photographs that I might try again. As a sort of seq. I suppose, they enclosed me a shilling's worth of stamps, saying it was the value of the glasses I had painted on. The

retained in their possession my two pictures and the small packing-case, which last had been part of my ten-shillings'-worth. I looked at my shabby parasol, and bitterly rued the price I had paid for my share of Messrs. Taykin and Kram's surplus stock.

I refused an invitation to Scotland after a careful and unsatisfactory review of my account-book, and made a solemn resolve that, whatever economies I might be reduced to, nothing should again induce me to try and increase my income by employment which would be "no hindrance to my present occupation."

## ONLY A BUSINESS MAN.

By MAY DRYDEN.

### CHAPTER XXXII.

"DICK, tell us what he said!" commanded Matty. She and Phoebe and Clarence, with Gordon, and Luke, and Dick, were sitting at the Carfields' dining-room window. Phoebe was at her old occupation of darning stockings.

"Tell us what he said," echoed Clarence. "We can get nothing out of him."

For Gordon had been talking to his mill-hands about their misbehaviour, and had come away from them, tired out, satisfied, but very uncommunicative.

"What shall I tell you?" replied Dick amiably.

"Everything," replied Matty.

"Here goes, then. First, he asked them what their grievances were, and they seemed to find it rather difficult to answer; but one or two grumbled out something about more wages. Then he proceeded to point out to them with mathematical precision and logical brevity that they were receiving the utmost they could reasonably expect. They were convinced with wonderful facility, his reasoning being, I fancy, assisted by the fact that they had, not long ago, nearly killed him, and were just a little sorry for it. Then he began to talk of the mischief they had done, and gave them the exact cost of the reading-room and books, told them he had no intention of rebuilding the one or providing more of the other, and asked them what they meant to do about it. They understood that; it being a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence; and were very much astonished, apparently not having imagined it was their place to do anything. But old Isaac Leighton spoke up and said they'd hold a meeting

and consider matters, and let 'th' measter know when 'twere settled.' After that, Gordon gave them a little homily on letting their angry passions rise, and on scandal, and upon my word"—Dick's tone became more serious—"before he had finished, half of those strong, rough fellows were in tears, and as for the women, there was not a dry eye amongst them. They gave him three splendid cheers as he came away, but as a truthful reporter, I am bound to remark that they—several of them—observed that they ought to follow them up with three groans for my respected cousins, Staniland and Mark. A little old fellow, however, restrained their ardour, and mentioned that Mark was real jannock for all his nasty ways, as they might see by the way he behaved on the night of the riot, cursing and swearing like a good 'un."

"Was that old Bowles?" asked Clarence. "I should not have thought he would have been among the rioters."

"He was there as a spectator. Old Bowles is a student of human nature as well as of the weather-odds."

"There!" said Gordon impatiently. "Enough of that. I am very glad it is all over. We must arrange our own plans now. There is a good deal to settle. One thing is settled. I go abroad on the first of next month and I take Phoebe with me."

"Gordon, no!" said Phoebe. "It is impossible——"

"You be quiet, little woman," said he, putting an arm round her. "Matty and I will arrange this. Pray give me your best attention, Matty, and tell me if there is anything impossible in my plans. The first of October is this day three weeks. My idea is that on the last day of September, Phoebe and I, and Clarence and Luke shall be married very quietly at the little old chapel on the green, and start next day."

"Yes," said Matty, nodding her head.

Clarence took it quietly—perhaps knew of the arrangement before—but Phoebe interposed an anxious:

"But, Gordon, the children?"

"Quiet, little woman; Matty and I will settle this. Matty, Dick is going to stay on at the Holme, and proposes to invite Peter and the boys to keep him company during our absence."

"He'll never manage them," said Matty.

"I reckon I can fettle them," said Dick contemplatively.

"Can you manage the house, then, and Runvan?" went on Gordon.



"Of course I can, and Dick must send for me if the boys over-eat themselves."

"That is settled then, and now all you have to do is to pack up, Phœbe."

"But," said Phœbe, blushing brightly, "I have nothing to pack up."

"That will be all right," said Clarence. "I have ordered your trousseau, dear. It will be my wedding-present to you."

"Do you really mean us to go together?" asked Luke. "I am afraid I cannot manage the expense, Gordon."

"The journey is my wedding-present to you. We all want a holiday, and we are going to have it. What does it matter whose pocket the money comes out of? And I fancy we shall find places big enough abroad to enjoy ourselves without being in each other's way."

"Where are we going?" asked Phœbe, who found herself assenting to all these propositions with a bewilderment as delightful as it was strange to her.

"To the Black Forest first," answered Clarence. "They say the Black Forest is nice in autumn. After that we may have a try at Switzerland. But we won't be tied to anything."

Matty took upon herself supreme command after that evening.

The news was broken to Mrs. Carfield, whom it aroused from her fretting after Daniel, and to Mr. Carfield, who, after a week's consideration, kindly gave his consent to the two marriages.

Gordon had a great deal to arrange before he could leave home—amongst other things, to settle what action he should take with regard to Thomas Brent. Fortunately it was just possible for him to be set at liberty before the end of the month, and, to everybody's surprise, his master exerted himself in his behalf, and even took him on again at the mill, where he appeared amongst his fellow-workmen at the beginning of October, very subdued, and very unlike the old Long Tom. We may as well say here before we dismiss him from our pages, that he kept his faith with Minnie, and married her—even became very fond of her, and made her a very good husband; her perfect love for and trust in him being a great comfort to him when he came out of prison. For silly little Minnie was always persuaded that her lover was a martyr, and never really fired the gun that injured her sister at all—a gun and a pistol being all one to her.

Deborah never married. But she did not lead at all an unhappy life. She was

respected and looked up to among her fellow-workers, and the consciousness of having saved her master's life was always present with her, gilding the dark places of her own, as a happy dream will sometimes make us contented for days after its dreaming. She was present at the double wedding in the little chapel.

Phœbe saw her standing under the lime-trees as she came out, and dropping her husband's arm, put her own arms round Deborah's neck, kissed her, and whispered:

"You saved his life, dear, and gave it to me. I will never forget."

The weddings were very quiet. No one resented that excepting Mr. Carfield and Everett Fenchurch, who would have preferred a larger assembly to witness the imposing and touching graciousness with which they gave away the two brides. Both were much affected by their renunciation, and found much consolation afterwards in each other's company.

It had been a great stretch of Everett's religious principles to enter a Unitarian chapel. But Gordon obstinately insisted on Mr. Franks performing the marriage-ceremony; and so fraternal affection overcame the elder Fenchurch's scruples, and he pointed to the occurrence all his life afterwards as a striking instance of religious liberality.

How they all fared on their wedding-journey I shall let them tell for themselves.

#### CHAPTER XXXIII. LETTER FROM PHŒBE TO MATTY.

"Brussels.  
"DEAR MATTY,—It is quite a relief to me to write your name, and so put myself in mind that I really am the same Phœbe I used to be. I am so bewildered. I can hardly believe sometimes that I am not dreaming, and am almost afraid to speak aloud lest I should wake myself up. We have been here two days now. I suppose yesterday was Sunday, but I am not sure. We have not seen Clarence and Luke since we came here, excepting at meal-times, and an American lady, who saw me nod to Clarence, asked if I knew who that lovely young creature was. Can you fancy me sitting down to dinner in full dress every night? Do you know I am afraid I must be greedy, I do so enjoy the dainty dinners we have here. After dinner we go to some gardens where there is a concert every evening, and stay there until quite late, listening to the music and drinking coffee. For it keeps quite warm and

dry here out of doors all night I think. This is a wonderful town, so bright and so merry. There could hardly be a greater contrast to Homcester. The people don't seem to care to do anything but enjoy themselves, and do not understand what being in a hurry is. That vexes Gordon, and every day, when we go for our letters before breakfast, he gets awfully angry with the clerk at the post-office. We have been to see some wonderful pictures, and we have been to the exhibition, and gave all our time there to machinery, so that I learnt a great deal about steam-engines. I keep wishing you were with us, Matty, but Gordon laughs, and says your turn will soon come. We did not have a pleasant journey from Calais, it was so hot, and we could not get anything to eat, excepting some sausage-rolls. The man charged Gordon double what they were worth, and an old French lady who was in the carriage was so angry. She made the cheat refund the extra money. To-morrow we are going on to Cologne by the night-train, because it is so hot. At least we are going if we can catch Clarence and Luke. I shall not be sorry to go, I want to get into the country, and besides we shall be eaten up by ants if we stay any longer. They are all over our rooms, in our portmanteaux, and everywhere, and when we complain, our chambermaid, Victorine, only smiles, and says, 'Yes, they are everywhere—partout.'

"Triberg.

"Oh dear! This is such a lovely place; I've looked and looked again from my window as I write, and now I've turned my back on it that I may not look any more. But I cannot help listening, and in this delightful little town there is running water everywhere. There is a little brook down each side of the street, and a fountain at every corner. There is a rushing, broken river running close to this queer old Lion Inn where we are staying; the dining-room wall rises sheer up from it. The air is quite full of the sound of waters and the burr of grasshoppers, and of the clean scent of the pine-woods. We got up so early this morning, and went out for a walk, thinking how we would crow over Luke and Clarence at breakfast-time. Over a bridge across the river first. Then away up the hill to the waterfall. Such a glorious waterfall! The river flings itself madly down its rocky bed, roaring, and tumbling, and struggling like a live creature in pain, tearing itself to pieces on

the sharp stones, and all to wear away perhaps just one hard corner in a hundred years. It made Gordon sad to look at it; he said it was just what hundreds of men were doing, wearing themselves out to achieve some almost impossible aim. But I showed him the river down below, none the worse for all its hard work, and just then we heard a call, and there were Luke and Clarence higher up than we were, for there are three bridges across the fall, and they had awakened before us after all. We are going to stay here ever so long; it is so pleasant climbing the hills and eating the wild raspberries, and gathering the wild flowers and lovely mosses. We like the people, too, and Gordon says it rests him to be where he could not talk business if he wanted to. We mean to learn some German before we go away; meantime Clarence interprets for us. I must tell you just a little about our journey here. We came straight through from Brussels. We got to Cologne about six, and went on to the steamer almost at once, and so got the best places, and first turn at the towel, which was nice; it got so wet afterwards, partly because the waiters wiped the dinner-plates on it. We were all day on the river, and it was after ten at night when we got to Mainz, dead tired. We had a hot, dusty journey next day, but we had nice travelling companions, a pretty American girl and her father. You cannot conceive how dirty we got, we were as black as colliers nearly, and near the end of the day this girl brought us a wet towel. She had been trying to fish for water out of the window with this towel tied to a string, for the train went very slowly, and there was water all along the line. The guard had seen her, and had taken her towel to the engine and wetted it there, and she had kept one end of it for us. Was it not good of her? Then there was an old man in the carriage with a little tiny girl. They had been travelling eight days, and the little one was tired and cross, but presently she went to sleep, and he sat and watched over her as though she was his dearest treasure, as no doubt she was. Good-bye now, dear.—Write soon to your loving sister,

"PHEBE FENCHURCH."

LETTER FROM MATTY TO PHEBE.

"Wilton.

"MY DEAR PHEBE,—You have been away from home a month now, and, much as you are enjoying yourself, I think you had better begin to think about coming

home again. You see, Daniel has come home. He is very brown and very quiet, and he has had his hair cut. The morning after he came home he went to Mr. Dodds and prevailed upon him to take him back. That was a week ago. He has been down in time for breakfast ever since, and he has been to see Netta five times already. Mother is quite well, and very happy in having Dan back, but she frets a little about his poetry. You see he has not touched a pen—poetically speaking—since he came back. I cannot quite make out what he has been doing, but at any rate he has had a pretty hard time of it, and it has altered him a good deal. The boys are all right. Dick manages his share of them pretty well, and brings them all up every evening to show them to me.—With love, your affectionate sister,

"MATTY.

"P.S.—Dick and I are going to be married. He bothered so, and made such a fuss, I had to give in to keep him quiet."

### COUNT PAOLO'S RING.

A SHORT SERIAL STORY.

#### CHAPTER II.

"THE Count Paolo, do you say? Nay, you are in luck, my friend, if you have gained the friendship of the Count Paolo Ostrolenka," Dr. Antonelli said the next morning, when, during his visit, Mr. Monteith produced the Count's cheque and asked the doctor to cash it. "He is not so rich—not so very rich, that is, like your English milords, but he knows all the rich strangers, the Americans, and English, and Russians—all the patrons of art; he will find a purchaser for the great picture, never fear. How did you come to know him?"

"Oh, he has heard my name talked of in artistic circles, and yesterday he defended my little girl from the insult of some rude blackguard, and, finding that she was my daughter, accompanied her home and asked to see my paintings," Mr. Monteith said carelessly.

"Ah, that would suit the Count, to play the part of defender of beauty in distress," said the little doctor with a merry twinkle of his black, bead-like eyes. "He is a perfect Bayard—a modern Don Quixote. Everyone in Nice knows the Count."

"What else is he?" Mr. Monteith laughed.

Dr. Antonelli looked grave. He shook his head and frowned thoughtfully.

"What else? Who knows?" he said. "He is known to everybody, and yet no one knows anything of him. He is a Pole, and of noble birth. His father was exiled to Siberia and died there, and his mother died broken-hearted when her child was but ten years old. They say," and the doctor lowered his voice, "that the Count is an ardent Nihilist, that he has been mixed up in every conspiracy against the Russian Government for the last ten years. They say, too, that he must have powerful friends at Court, or he would have shared his father's fate long ago."

Angela had listened to the conversation with glowing cheeks and eager, bright eyes. This spice of mystery and romance was all that was needed to complete the fascination, which the Count's handsome face and stately air had already begun to exercise over her romantic mind. It seemed to the grateful girl as if in him she beheld the embodiment of all her favourite heroes, whether in romance, or in real life, or in saintly legends. He was like Esmond, like Stafford—nay, like the blessed St. George himself, the girl thought, with her lips quivering and her heart beating with a new, exquisite happiness. And he had thought her beautiful, he had chosen her portrait from among all the other paintings; perhaps—oh, the joyful thought!—might hang it in the room where he sat. The hope of seeing him again—for had he not promised an early visit!—gave a new beauty to her face, a new lustre to her eyes. Even her father, capricious and selfish as he was, and wrapt up in himself and his own sufferings, noticed and wondered over the change in her, but was far from attributing it to the right cause. Only two days passed before Paolo fulfilled his promise, and finding how much pleasure his visit gave to the invalid, he repeated it several times during the next fortnight. He had not as yet succeeded in finding a purchaser for the "Hypatia," but he was confident of doing so shortly, and, indeed, had decided, if no one else came forward, to purchase it himself. And in the meantime he took care that his protégée should want for nothing.

Twice a week a basket of wine, and fruit, and dainty food was sent from his hotel, and Paolo himself never went empty-handed. He had always flowers for Angela, or a new book, or some English papers, wherewith to while away the tedious hours of the invalid. It was not

always convenient to spare time for these visits, but "It will not be for long," the Count told himself with a shrug of his shoulders. Every day Mr. Monteith grew weaker—every day he approached more nearly to the frontier of the land whence no return is possible.

"The end is not very far off," so Antonelli, who met the Count on the staircase one afternoon, said gravely, in answer to his enquiry after the patient. "You are his friend, Count. Advise him to communicate with his relatives in England. It will be terrible for that poor child to be left here alone and friendless among strangers."

"Not friendless—never friendless, when I am here," Paolo said quickly, and with a flush on his dark face.

The little doctor smiled oddly, and shook his head.

"Perhaps the Count Paolo would be scarcely a fit protector for a young, beautiful girl," he said dryly, "unless, indeed," and he looked keenly at the Count, "he intends to make her—his wife!"

The Count started, coloured, and a sudden light flashed into his brilliant eyes. It faded as quickly as it came, and his face regained its usual grave, melancholy air.

"That is impossible," he said briefly; "domestic ties—the love of wife, and home, and children—are beyond my reach. Yes, you are right; Monteith must not be kept in ignorance of his danger. I will speak to him to-day."

"It will not be a pleasant task."

"Possibly not," and the Count shrugged his shoulders; "but I will do it for his daughter's sake."

He passed the doctor with a bow and a few farewell words, and ascending the staircase knocked at the door. He expected that as usual it would be opened by Angela, but instead, Mr. Monteith's voice bade him enter, and he found on doing so that she was absent.

How bare and desolate the room looked without her! Paolo thought. But he could not regret her absence just then, for it made his difficult task a little easier. It would have been impossible, so he felt, to have opened his errand in her presence. He found it very difficult to convince Mr. Monteith of his danger, or of the necessity of writing to his friends.

The artist laughed at Paolo's grave face and air; declared that he was better—much better, that, much as he liked and respected Antonelli, he did not think very highly of his medical skill.

"Why, I feel ten times stronger than I did a fortnight ago—more thanks to you, Count," he added graciously, "than to Antonelli. There is no medicine so efficacious as a dose of hope, and that you gave me on your first visit; I was pretty nearly despairing then." He paused and looked up with his bright, haggard eyes into Paolo's grave face. "Wait till you bring me the news that a purchaser is found for my 'Hypatia.' That will be a draught of the true elixir of life!" he cried, and his cheeks flushed with eager excitement.

"I hope to do so soon, and in the meanwhile promise that you will write to your friends, Monteith," Paolo urged.

"Oh, I will write, since you make such a point of it, I will write!" Monteith answered irritably; "but I fervently trust that my pretty Angel will never be obliged to accept help from them. Ah, you cannot guess what they are, Count! Purse-proud, wealthy manufacturers, without an idea beyond shirrings, and flannels, and Manchester goods, who look down upon us artists and men of genius with supreme contempt and disdain; who care for nothing, think of nothing but money-grubbing. Bah, I hate the whole tribe!"

"But for Angel's sake," the Count urged.

"For Angel's sake? Well, yes. They are rich. I will swallow my pride, and write. But," and the invalid smiled defiantly, "I don't mean to die just yet, Count. I intend to cheat both you and the doctor yet," he cried. And he sank back on his pillows with a feeble laugh.

"I trust so, my friend," the Count answered.

As he spoke, the door opened, and Angela entered. Her cheeks were flushed with the sun, and the wind had blown her yellow hair over her forehead in a hundred enchanting little tendrils and curls. Her hands were full of great yellow lilies, and they shone like gold against the dark-blue of her dress. Her presence seemed to brighten the whole room, Paolo thought. It was like a sudden burst of sunshine in a gloomy place.

Angela's eyes brightened as they fell on his face. Twice during the past week she had been absent during his visits—those visits which were, indeed, almost the only pleasure in her dull life, for which she looked with ever-increasing eagerness and delight—and she had been bitterly disappointed. But though she rarely left her

father, it was absolutely necessary sometimes that she should go out to purchase provisions, or to bring medicine from the doctor's.

Once, as she was returning from Antonelli's, she saw the Count driving in a grand carriage with two great ladies—the Princess di Capri and her sister, who were considered the most beautiful women in Nice. He had bent forward, and smiled, and bowed to her; and Angela was conscious that his companions turned and looked with amused, curious eyes at the girl in the shabby blue dress, to whom Paolo bowed so profoundly.

Angela had not thought that he would see her. She had expected that he would be too much engrossed with his beautiful companions to take any notice of her, and she went on her way with her heart beating with delight and triumph at the kindly salutation.

Once, too, she saw him in church. She had been kneeling before the Virgin's shrine, pouring out with simple faith the story of her troubles into the ears of the Holy Mother, and, rising a little comforted, she had turned to see the Count standing near her. The sunshine was pouring through the stained windows; it painted the marble floor with splashes of gold, and crimson, and purple, and flung a quivering golden mist down the long aisle.

Paolo stood in the midst of this golden mist—a tall, majestic figure, with his absorbed face and brilliant eyes! He looked at her, smiled, and held out his hand.

"I saw you enter; I was waiting for you, Angel," he said; and there was a caressing cadence in his voice as if—as indeed was the case—he loved to linger over the name. Was it any wonder that to the romantic, grateful girl he seemed a true hero of romance?

Another fortnight passed, and it became evident to everyone but the patient himself and Angela, that the end was rapidly approaching. Every day Monteith grew weaker, though he obstinately refused to believe it, and was fertile in finding excuses for his increasing weakness.

"The weather is so hot; even Angel, who has never had a day's illness in her life, looks pale and drooping," he said triumphantly. "It is no wonder if I feel oppressed and wearied. When the cooler weather comes I shall be better."

So he said and so he believed, and

taught Angela to believe, and grew half angry sometimes when Paolo refused to echo the hopeful words. But Paolo knew better. He had brought a great English doctor who was passing through Nice, to see his friend, and he could not forget the verdict which the great man, after his interview with Monteith, had unhesitatingly pronounced.

"The poor fellow is dying. He may linger on a few weeks, possibly months, or he may die at any moment. The rupture of even a small vessel would be fatal at once, and that, with his cough, might happen at any time."

This was the verdict, and Paolo could not forget it or bring himself to echo the invalid's hopeful words. But yet, though he was fully prepared for it, the end, when it did come, seemed to him awfully sudden.

He had been out of town for a couple of days, and on returning to his hotel, as soon as he had bathed and refreshed himself, he went to call on his friends.

Twice he knocked without receiving any answer. He tried the door, but it was fastened from within. He called, but no one answered. Not a sound disturbed the awful stillness in the house, and his heart sank with a presentiment of evil as he stood without the closed door.

"Angela—Angela!" he cried at last, "it is I—Paolo! Will you not open the door?"

A slight movement—a sound like a stifled sob within the room answered him—then a slow footstep came across the floor, the lock slid back, and the door was opened by Angela herself. But an Angela so changed, so white and wan, and with such a look of awful anguish in her great eyes, that Paolo, for one moment, was stricken dumb with horror and surprise. The next, he comprehended what had taken place during his absence, and knew the event which he had dreaded had come to pass, and that, all alone and friendless, the girl had stood face to face with death's terrible mysteries.

Oh, if he had but been with her! Paolo thought.

He did not speak. He could not. But he took her hands, and held them tightly in his own. She looked up at him with blank, dark eyes.

"You have come too late, Count. I died last night," she said in a low, naturally calm voice. "It was very sudden. I had left him but half an hour. He had been feverish and restless all the day, for

letter had come from England which excited him much, but he was better when I left him. He said he could sleep, and he kissed me, and said good-night, and half an hour afterwards I heard a cry—a moan, and he was gone! There was no time even to say good-bye!”

“My poor child—my poor dear little one; and you were all alone!” Paolo cried.

His voice quivered, and his eyes moistened, but there were no tears in Angela's great burning orbs. She looked at him still with that calm, blank gaze.

“The neighbours were very kind—Madame Perriot, the grocer's wife, especially kind. They did all that was necessary for him. Come and see him.”

Still holding the Count's hand, she moved across the floor, past the easel and the table where the canvas and the tubes of colours were still lying, to the bedside where the dead man lay. The face looked very calm and beautiful with its lines and wrinkles all smoothed away by Death's kind fingers. A strange look of youthfulness had come back to it, and Paolo for the first time was struck by the strong likeness it bore to the beautiful face now bending over it.

“They say he must be buried to-morrow, monsieur. Surely that is very soon?” Angela whispered.

“Not for this country, my child. It is better so,” the Count answered tenderly. “But you—you must not stay here and alone! Let me take you to Dr. Antonelli's. His wife is a good woman. She will be kind and tender to you, I know, but you cannot stay here alone.”

Angela gave a little disdainful smile.

“Why not? I am not afraid—why should I be? Yes, I will stay; I will be with him as long as I can. They will take him from me soon enough,” she went on with a little despairing sob; “I will not leave him.”

“Not if I ask it? See, it is for his sake. He would have wished it,” Paolo said in his deep, tender voice. “Come with me, my child.”

But even Paolo's entreaties failed to induce Angela to leave the house while her father remained unburied. She did, indeed, consent to accompany the Count to the cemetery, and chose a quiet corner under a group of ilex-trees for the grave, and she went with him to the florist's and bought a great basket of flowers to strew in the coffin, but when he would have

taken her to Dr. Antonelli's house, she steadily refused. He was obliged at last to give up the attempt to persuade her, though the idea of her passing the night alone in that house was eminently distasteful and repulsive to him, and he gladly acquiesced when Madame Perriot, the grocer's kind-hearted wife, suggested that her daughter—a girl of two-and-twenty—should share Angela's bed.

“She will be company for the poor child,” Madame, who came in during Paolo's visit, said kindly. “It is impossible,” and she crossed herself piously, “that she should sleep alone and next door to—all night. Yes, my child,” as Angela gave a contemptuous smile; “it is true.”

Angela gave way at last. She did not want Lisa's company, but she did not persist in her refusal when she saw how much Paolo was relieved by the suggestion. He thanked Madame Perriot warmly, and contrived unseen by Angela to press money into her hand.

“Get her all she requires, madame—a black frock—the English think so much of black,” he whispered.

But the colour of her dress was a matter of very little importance to Angela just then. She seemed utterly indifferent—utterly heartbroken. Her father's death had been to her such a sudden, unexpected shock that it seemed at first as if she was unable to realise it—as if all other feelings were swallowed up in a blank, despairing apathy.

Paolo did his best to rouse her. He paid her frequent, almost daily visits. Now and then he would bring a carriage and drive her out into the country, but his efforts met with very faint success.

Angela was always pleased to see him—was always gentle and grateful, and always welcomed him with a faint smile, but she seemed almost indifferent about the future, and only looked faintly interested when he told her that he had written to her relatives in England to inform them of Mr. Monteith's death, and that, until the answer to his letter arrived, he thought her wisest plan was to accept Dr. Antonelli's offer of a home.

She acquiesced meekly—as she would have acquiesced in anything, no matter what, that Paolo suggested—it seemed quite natural to her that the Count should settle all her affairs for her; tell her where to go and what to do, and she was perfectly passive in his hands, and at first accepted all his kindness as a matter of

course. By-and-by, however, as the first crushing effects of her trouble wore away, she awoke to a more lively sense of Paolo's kindness, and the dull insensibility in her heart was banished by a passionate gratitude and affection.

Oh, how cold—how ungrateful she had been! the girl thought remorsefully. Oh, if it were but possible for her to show her gratitude—her devotion! But her whole life would be too short for that! And she poured out upon him a passionate devotion which grew in strength and fervency daily.

Dr. Antonelli's wife scarcely approved of the Count's frequent visits. She could not but notice the delight which they gave to Angela, and how eagerly she watched for them; and she was secretly a little uneasy and troubled.

It was so very unlikely, she told her husband, that the Count Paolo would think of making a penniless English girl his wife; but she need not have feared, for no thought of love or marriage had entered Angela's head. Paolo was a much too exalted personage in her eyes for that to be possible, and if, indeed, he had stooped from the pedestal on which she had placed him and asked for her love, she would have been as much surprised as was, no doubt, that fair beggar-maid whom King Cophetua invited to share his kingly state.

It was fortunate that this was so, for as Count Paolo had said once to Antonelli, "Love and marriage were not for him." Of his own free will he had chosen a path which he must tread alone—a path beset with dangers and difficulties, which he had no right to ask any woman to share. He had high aims, a noble object in life, and the domestic joys, which come in the natural order of things to most men, must give place to these.

But still Angela's innocent affection was very precious to him. If he had been a

few years older, or she a few years younger, he would gladly have kept her with him always, instead of committing her to the care of these English relations of whom Monteith had spoken so slightly. But he knew that this was impossible, and he knew also that it was better so. She would be safer, happier, in a quiet English home than sharing his wandering, perilous life. By-and-by, no doubt, she would marry some young Englishman—a face so fair, a manner so winning could not fail to win love, Paolo thought—and forget him, Paolo, or only connect him with the memory of those sad days of poverty and sorrow—think of him as her father's friend—her own benefactor.

But though Paolo had a greater insight into human nature than most people can boast of, he failed to understand Angela. He thought of her only as a child who gave him a child's affection and gratitude—quickly given, as quickly forgotten; and he never guessed at the inexhaustible spring of gratitude and love which had sprung up in her heart for him—a love which asked for and expected no return, which neither time nor circumstances nor any other love could alter or decay.

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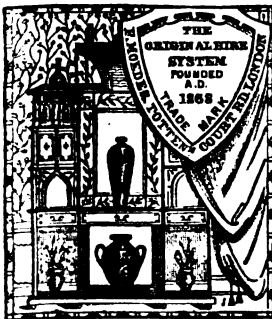
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